No.4
October, 1992
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ARENA MAGAZINE

DC's ECLIPSO ARTIST
BART SEARS
INTERVIEWED

DALE KEOWN
TALKS ABOUT PITT

Up-To-Date
News and Interviews

MARVEL 2099

Comics...Gaming...Cards...Toys...and much more

TEMPERED STEELE

By Dwayne Haddix, Bob Hickey and new-coming artist extraordinaire Don Hillsman!

COMING IN '93
FROM SKY COMICS

Watch For It!

NEWSFLASH!

Darkness Falls On Image

Coming this fall from the creators of Image Comics, an anthology of gritty treacherous and violent stories from the underbelly of the Image Universe—*Darker Image*.

Jim Lee, Sam Kieth and Rob Liefeld will showcase their respective new characters—Deathblow, the Maxx and Bloodwulf—in *Darker Image* #1, a twenty-four page color monthly series from (who else?) Image.

Bloodwulf (Rob Liefeld)—Bloodwulf's adventures bring him into conflict with everything (and everyone) from dinosaurs to evil corporations to guys with arms as big as couches!

The story starts off on a small scale with Bloodwulf destroying an entire planet and things get even more outrageous from there. Unlike anything ever done by creator Rob Liefeld, Bloodwulf makes a fitting addition to *Darker Image*: he's violent, he's got a nasty sense of humor and he doesn't appreciate cracks about his hair! Written, pencilled and inked by Liefeld, this is the second installment of a five-part story begun in *Brigade* #4.

The Maxx (Sam Kieth & Wm. Messner-Loebs)—Sam Kieth debuts his first Image series, written by Bill Loebs, Maxx is the underdog of the Image group. He's not the strongest or the smartest of the Image heroes, but he is definitely the toughest! He thinks he's in the outback of Australia fighting giant monsters and deadly creatures with a jungle girl sent to help him. She believes he is a homeless guy living in the present day with mental problems. The problem is, who's correct?

Deathblow (Jim Lee)—A killer for an anonymous intelligence agency learns a fatal illness shall soon take his own life. Seeking peace and salvation at a mysterious monastery, he quickly becomes caught in a whirlwind of death and mayhem and must rely upon the old ways to survive.

Ken Kelly Trading Cards

Ken Kelly is said by many to be producing today's most powerful fantasy images. Now, FPG Cards is proud to announce the December release of the "Ken Kelly Fantasy Art Trading Cards"! UV coated on both sides, this magnificent new 90 card series reproduces in full color all of Kelly's finest paintings, like his most popular pieces from the covers of Warren Magazines' "Creepy", "Eerie" and "Vampirella." Also reproduced are his finest Sword &Sorcery paintings, including such Robert E. Howard greats as "The Hour of the Dragon", "The People of the Black Circle" and "Red Nails." Topping off this stunning collection are many new, never-before-seen paintings that will boggle your mind. Bonus Cards you can get: the original oil painting "Attack From Above", one of twenty original pen & ink drawings, 1,000 signed autographed cards, and incredible barbarian Holograms. Production will be limited to 5,000 Cases. Ships in December.

About the cover..
Bart Sears' rendition of his newest project, DC's *Eclipso: The Darkness Within*. Bart is also our feature interview this very issue.

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LOOK OUT! HERE COMES THE PUBLISHER!

Glad to see you're back!

Another summer has come and gone. With its end, the major conventions are over and now its back to work as *unusual*.

This issue is running a little late but we should have things back on schedule by issue #5. As you've probably noticed we don't have a large staff and this has caused a slight delay in our schedule, but that has been remedied of late by a culmination of contacts that has allowed us to add more columnists, interviewers, and researchers. Good people, all.

I must apologize. The flip-cover featuring Batman that we announced for this issue had to be pushed back to a later date, so we could get more in-depth articles and do a blow-out special.

That's what we don't got but look what we do! This issue includes a *Bart Sears* interview, a *Dale Keown* interview, a *Marvel 2099* staff interview, a spotlight on *Covington Cross*, a guest editorial by Jerry Smith on Letter Hacking, tons o'news and much, much more.

Next Issue...the scoop of the year! Image's new *Tribe* by Larry Stroman and Todd Johnson. *AM #5* will be polybagged and include a one-of-a-kind trading card debuting a new, hot looking character from this sure to be smash hit from Stroman, Johnson and Image shipping in February of 93'.

Also, next issue we'll announce the winner of the Hugh Haynes original artwork give-away! And, we will have a special flip-cover featuring TSR's *Tales Of The Lance*, illustrated by Larry Elmore, a fellow Kentuckian. Everthing here's ready to go and it's looking great!

Publisher's Gripe Alert! Alternative Publishers where are you? Come on ! I know it's not that easy to put together comics *and* get decent orders *and* get it to the printer *but* if you don't get us the news we can't promote it and so we have to fill our issues with Marvel and Image news. So, come on and get us that press release NOW!

I'd like to thank everyone who's helped us get this magazine off the ground. It's been a struggle and, at the start, we didn't have the inside friends that it takes but with every issue we seem to meet someone new who helps out, so, THANKS!!

B.

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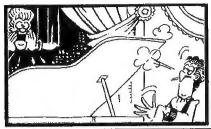
Columnist Jerry Smith strikes again!



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GUEST EDITORIAL!

by Jerry Smith

I've got a confession to make--I was a letterhack for years. You know, one of those obnoxious people who have nothing better to do than write a bunch of whiny letters to funny books? The kind of people you get sick of seeing their names in EVERY DAMN COMIC BOOK PUBLISHED? I was one of those people, and, to be honest, I was pretty good at it. I was different though, in the fact that I had two rules about every letter I ever wrote: 1.) Always write honest opinions, and 2.) Put your real name and address on every piece of correspondece you mail. If you have an opinion about something, especially a controversial subject, you should have the guts to face up to a rebuttal, be it in print or in the form of a personal letter. Pretty simple, actually.

I've drastically cut down my letterhacking these last few years, due mostly to time constraints. Plus, Arena takes up a lot of my free time lately, and I can be much more free to express my opinions and still be printed. But there are a lot of great things about being a letterhack. At the height of my "career" in comics related writing I was writing to six people in three different countries and two or three comics a week. Not every letter I wrote was printed, but enough were to make it worth my while. It's addicting to see your name in print, and you get mail from and make friends with people from all over.

Not everything about letterhacking was peachy. I received some mail from some strange people, some in my home town. When I had a letter published in Sable that was considered anti-gay by some, I was forced to endure all kinds of progay literature sent to my home, NONE of it marked with a return address. So much for backing your opinions with courage. I also became a little disgusted with the way some companies were treating the fans who took the time to write in. Marvel was the worst offender. Their books usually didn't feature letter columns at the time, and when they did the columns read like a Marvel PR brochure. I'm almost sure it was house policy that only resoundingly positive letters would be published. I did manage to have negative letters printed at Marvel, but they were all either edited or altered in some way. To this day I'm not sure what they did to my letter that appeared in *Wolverine*, but the letter I sent in was not the letter they printed. Well, not exactly. DC was a little more honest in their columns, but more on that in a minute.

The independents are really the only place a letter writer can express his or her opinions without the fear of censorship. Independent comic companies like Dark Horse and Eclipse attract the more intelligent reader, and as a result, get more intelligent letters. If someone has an honest beef, they usually give them a fair hearing. Of course, the editor always has the last word. It's the nature of the beast.

Which brings me to the main point of this column. As I've slowed down in letter writing, I've been a bit more acidic in print about my gripes about mainstream comics. I realize what you're thinking. Me? Acidic? Believe it or not, it's true. I love mainstream

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Writing: Address all submissions to Arena Magazine, 264 Main Street, Florence, Kentucky, 41042. Please enclose a S.A.S.E. Submissions must be typed, double spaced. Keep a copy of your manuscript. Only send copies. Always put your name, complete address, and phone number on each page of article.

Art: Address all submissions to Arena Magazine, 264 Main Street, Florence, Kentucky, 41042. Send good copies of stats please. Put your name and address on the back of each piece of art. Always include an S.A.S.E. if you wish your materials returned.

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COMIC NEWS

Caliber Offers Ali-Baba

A new series chronicling the adventures of one of the greatest figures in literature, Ali-Baba! Each of these issues will be a self-contained story of the thrilling sword and sorcery figure in the mystical era of the Arabian Nights. The first issue tells the story of Ali and how he came to control the forty thieves. Introduction is by Dave Sim (*Cerebus*) who originally worked on the project a long time ago and provided the initial layouts and script for the first portion. Sim will also include a retrospective on the project. In addition, Sim provided the layout for the cover which has been pencilled by Dale Keown (*Hulk, Pitt*)! The 40 page issue is written by James Waley with assists by Dave Darrigo (*Wordsmith*) and illustrated by comic veterans Steve LeBlanc and Ron Kasman. Look for the second issue in February which features a cover by Dave Ross (*Alpha Flight, Avengers*) and P. Craig Russell.

DINOSAURS FOR HIRE

Hot Series Returns As Sega Video Game And New Full Color Comic!
Sega To Ship 250,OOO Game Units In February!

Malibu Comics has reached an agreement with creator Tom Mason for the long-awaited return of *Dinosaurs For Hire*. "The big, bad boys of prehistory are back," Mason said. *Dinosaurs For Hire* is scheduled as a regular, full color, monthly series beginning in February 1993.

"There's been a lot of licensing activity surrounding *Dinosaurs For Hire*," Mason said. "20th Century Fox still has film and television rights to the property and is now trying to launch an afternoon cartoon series. An interactive CD version of the series came out earlier this year." According to Mason, however, the big news is the February 1993 release of the Sega Genesis video game. Sega plans to ship 250,000 units of *Dinosaurs For Hire*, back by an extensive print and television campaign.

"Sega acquired the video game rights about 18 months ago," Mason said, "thanks in large part to some programmers who were also fans of the series." A company called Interactive Designs worked on the game with Mason's input. "I worked pretty closely with them, incorporating some of the game elements into the comic and vice versa."

One of the new elements Mason came up with was the introduction of a new Dinosaur character. "I wanted to shake up the existing cast a bit," he said. "And to let people know that the series was moving forwards."

Mason promises that the new series will take on the comics industry, licensing, lawyers, agents, the government, crime, aliens "along with the expected violence that's bound to occur when Dinosaurs are allowed to bear arms." The series will also introduce two new larger-than-life villains and feature some surprise guest-stars from the Malibu Universe of characters.

Artist Mitch Byrd (*Cat & Mouse*) has signed on as penciller for the new monthly series and Bruce McCorkindale has come aboard as inker.

COMIC NEWS

THE FABULOUS FURRY FREAK BROTHERS ARE BACK

The rumors circulating at this year's San Diego Comic Con August 12th through 16th are true: Gilbert Shelton and Paul Mavrides are back in the groove, and a brand new issue of their world-famous *Fabulous Furry Freak Brothers* comix series is about to appear. The new comic will feature the talents of German cartoonist Gerhard Seyfried as well, in a story lampooning the avant garde art scene.

Phineas, Fat Freddy and Freewheelin' Frank, counterculture heroes since their first comix appearance in 1968, are now approaching their 25th anniversary and celebrations are already underway in Europe. But a new Freak Brothers issue is a rare event these days. The first collection of their adventures was published by Rip Off Press (founded in 1969 by Shelton, fellow underground cartoonist Jack Jackson, Fred Todd and Dave Moriaty) in 1971. A Twentieth Anniversary edition, latest of at least 20 different printings, was released by Rip Off last year. During the early and mid-1970's new issues came out on a yearly basis, but after the Freak Brothers ceased to be a weekly feature of the Rip Off Comics Syndicate the frequency decreased. The epic, full color adventure "The Fabulous Furry Freak Brothers in 'The Idiots Abroad'" was released as Freak Brothers Comix #'s 8, 9 and 10 in the mid-1980's, followed in 1990 by Freak Brothers Comix #11. This issue was also in full color and featured a mix of new material and classic stories reprinted from the 1977 paperback Thoroughly Ripped.

Now, with *Freak Brothers Comix* #12, the hirsute trio return to their roots in an all-new black & white comic packed with hilarious short stories and single-page strips. Shelton and Mavrides demonstrate once again that as true comedic archetypes, the Freaks will never become outdated. Through the "Peace-Dope-Free Love" Sixties, the cocaine crazed "Me Decade" of the Seventies, the Reagan Era of the Eighties and into the harsh economic realities of the Nineties, the Fabulous Furry Freak Brothers keep on truckin'.

MARVEL LAUNCHES BRAND NEW CONCEPT IN ANNUALS

NEW YORK—Marvel Entertainment Group has created an exciting new concept for their comic book annuals. Beginning in the 1993 annual season (roughly April through August), each annual edition published by Marvel will showcase an all-new original Super Hero or Super Villain.

"For the past five years, our annuals have successfully featured various types of crossovers, but now we felt it was time to try something new and different," said senior executive editor Mark Gruenwald.

Looking for a fresh approach, the editorial team at Marvel struck on the idea of unifying each of the annuals with a common theme, rather than a common storyline.

"After due creative deliberation, our editorial braintrust came up with the idea to make the focus of the annuals 'The Superstars of Tomorrow' and have each annual premier a new, never-before-seen Super Hero or Villain" Gruenwald said.

Gruenwald emphasized that "while the Marvel Universe has had no shortage of new Super Heroes and Villains created for our various ongoing titles in the last few years, we've not specifically designed, groomed or launched these new characters to be the next wave of Marvel Super Heroes."

The 1993 annual plan calls for all 24 of the 64-page special issues to feature new character premieres; 24 annuals, 24 new characters. There will be no crossover storylines, no family groupings and no umbrella titles. Each annual will have selfcontained stories.

The new character's origin, back story, powers and costume will be fully delineated in the course of the annual. Each character will be well integrated into the existing Marvel Universe.

Gruenwald said that the new annual program allows Marvel's writers and artists "to let loose with their creativity and roll out some of the characters that they've been nurturing in the backs of their minds and never really had a place to feature them to their fullest advantage."

COMIC NEWS

POIT! FLOON! KAPWEENG! KURGLEFLOOSH!

Publisher Mike Richardson announced that Dark Horse Comics has entered into an agreement with the legendary artist Don Martin to produce several projects over the next few months, including books, signed lithographs, and figurines.

Don Martin's timeless humor has been featured in MAD and CRACKED magazines for many years. During this time, Martin has honed and refined his style. making him the master of the printed sound effect.

Don Martin's Droll Book, a 128-page B&W trade paperback full of Martin's unique and contagious goofiness, covers almost everything from his famous one-page slapstick gags to the wit and wackiness of family life in his daily newspaper strip *The Nutheads*.

In addition to the paperback, Dark Horse plans to publish 500 hardcover limited-edition Droll books featuring an all-new, tipped in full-color signature plate signed and numbered by the artist! This book is scheduled to ship in late November.

Also available from Dark Horse Comics in early December will be the first in a series of limited edition signed lithographs featuring the art of Don Martin. These lithos will be limited to a press run of 500, and each will be personally autographed by the artist.

Finally, Dark Horse Comics presents the Don Martin Cold-Cast porcelain figures. These hand-painted porcelain statues, five in all, bring to life the madness of Martin's art. The objects d'art will be sold individually and released throughout 1993, with the first figure ready for shipping early in the year.

IMAGE UPDATE

Can you image Alan Moore, Frank Miller and Todd McFarlane in one comic book? That's going to happen in *Spawn #8* when Todd illustrates Alan Moore's first full length Spawn story focusing on the origin of Spawn's costume and his trip through Hell. Todd McFarlane will spoof his famous Spider-Man pose on the cover for the issue and Frank Miller provides the center-spread pull-out poster! "This is a special issue that contains the big 3M's of comics," McFarlane said. "You can see why Spawn is definitely here to stay!" *Spawn #8* is solicited for December release.

Sam Kieth, Jim Lee and Rob Liefeld will all be part of Darker Image, the new Image Comics anthology series. The book will feature Lee's *Deathblow*, Liefeld's *Bloodwulf* and Kieth's *The Maxx*.

Al Gordon and Jerry Ordway have joined the Image Universe and will be teaming up on *Wildstar: Sky Zero*, due from Image in early '93. Gordon will be writing and inking, Ordway will be pencilling.

Larry Stroman and Todd Johnson have also joined the Image Universe and will be bringing their series *Tribe* to the company in '93. Stroman is the former artist on X-Factor.

Dale Keown's *Pitt* will be featured in the back of *Youngblood #4*, beginning a story that will eventually tie in with Pitt #2.

Stormwatch, Jim Lee's follow-up series to *WILDC.A.T.S*, will debut in '93.

The Others, Jim Valentino's follow-up series to *Shadowhawk*, will debut in '93. A sneak preview of *The Others* was featured in the now-sold-out Shadowhawk #1.

According to creator Rob Liefeld, *Youngblood: Battlezone #1* will be a behind-the-scenes look at the weapons, equipment, and transport of America's hot new super-team. Liefeld, Richard Horie and Eric Stephenson will be putting the project together.

Erik Larsen's hot summer mini-series, *The Savage Dragon*, will be returning in '93 as a regular monthly series.

Jim Lee's *WILDC.A.T.S #2* will feature a special prism cover as well as a short *Wetworks* back-up by Whilce Portacio.

COMIC NEWS

DRASTIC CHANGES IN STORE FOR THE AVENGERS WEST COAST

NEW YORK---Already shaken by the apparent death of Tony Stark, the Avengers West Coast are going to be stunned by a series of further shocks as they mourn their fallen comrade. In fact, in issue #89, shipping October 6, they'll begin to wonder if the AWC can survive as a Super Hero group at all.

Extremely distressed by Stark's death, for instance, Living Lightning decides to reassess his life as a Super Hero and go back to school, leaving the already short-handed group with only five permanent members. Meanwhile, Wonder Man has been experiencing erratic fluctuations in his powers.

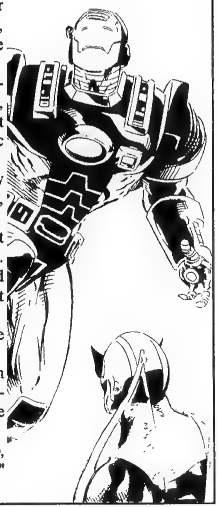
Jim Rhodes, who is now wearing the Iron Man armor, initially volunteers to join the Avengers West Coast in Tony Stark's absence, but then declines when he is asked to reveal his identity.

In the midst of all this uncertainty, Ultron, perhaps the AWC's most deadly villain is back in his ultimate robotic form to destroy mankind. An appearance by the Vision, who shows up for unknown reasons and who hasn't been seen in Avengers West Coast since issue #55, almost 2 years ago, adds to the chaotic mix of special events.

Avengers West Coast is written by Tony Thomas, penciled by Dave Ross, inked by Tim Dzon, and edited by Nel Yomtov.

"The creative team have really gotten this title into high gear with the last couple of story arcs, which featured Spider-Man and Wolverine," Yomtov said. "The appearance of The Vision is sure to captilize on the newfound interest that the creators have generated."

"The absence of Iron Man will have profound effects on the group, and we have some big plans and storylines to follow up on that point," he concluded.



EXOTIC FANTASY THE WILL MEUGNIOT SKETCHBOOKS

X-MEN ANIMATION PRODUCER'S SKETCHBOOKS ARE PUBLISHED BY EROS

WILL MEUGNIOT, artist and co-creator of *THE DNAgents*, creator of Pacific Comic's *VANITY*, and producer of countless animated projects (including Marvel's *X-MEN* pilot AND new series) opens his sketchbooks for the first time! Starting in October, Eros Comics will be publishing a three issue magazine series, *EXOTIC FANTASY*, which presents the first exciting look at literally hundreds of Will's previously unpublished drawings.

Will was one of the artists most responsible for today's resurgence of interest in "good girl" art and, as you might suspect, *EXOTIC* contains many drawings of attractive women in minimal clothing. However, unlike most ADULTS ONLY publications available in the direct sales market, the adult content stops with nudity. "There are no sexually explicit scenes in *EXOTIC*", says Meugniot. "The only reason for the self-imposed Adults Only label is, being a sketchbook, it contains a lot of pure figure drawings."

The foreward for the first issue of *EXOTIC* is written by Meugniot's long time collaborator, Mark Evanier. Plus, in addition to the sketchbook material, readers will see the original development drawings for *VANITY*, *THE DNAgents*, and dozens of new characters intended for future publication and television projects, including a sneak peak at Evanier and Meugniot's new *DNAgents* series.

COMIC NEWS

Robin teams with theHuntress in ROBIN III with moving covers!

Twice now, Batman's young protege has flown alone. Each time fans went wild. Now Chuck Dixon, Tom Lyle and Bob Smith reunite to send Robin on his greatest challenge--this time with a new partner.

ROBIN III: CRY OF THE HUNTRESS is a 6-issue miniseries in the Standard Format, shipping biweekly with spectacular promotional innovations and enhancements retailers have come to expect from a Robin miniseries. Exclusively for the covers of the direct market Collector's Edition of each issue of *ROBIN III: CRY OF THE HUNTRESS* is an entirely new movement-enhanced technology. The covers contain an insert that, when pulled up or down, creates the appearance of movement.

Applied to the covers of *ROBIN III: CRY OF THE HUNTRESS*, the image piece is reversible. Readers need only slide it out, turn it over, and slide it back in to see the second image. This Collector's Edition is poly-bagged and contains a miniposter of the cover art for the Newsstand Edition by Mike Zeck.

The Newsstand Editions of *ROBIN III: CRY OF THE HUNTRESS* contain the same exciting story as the Collector's Editions as the young Robin feels forced to disobey Batman for the first time, an act that causes dangerous repercussions and death-defying challenges.

A gang-war has erupted in Gotham. King Snake and the Ghost Dragons are trying to hold their ground against the artel, a Russian mob led by the KGBeast and the Commisar. Defying Batman's orders, Robin uncovers a plot that he soon realizes is far more than a criminal power struggle, but a sinister web of international intrigue and economic warfare. Drawn into the mystery is the Huntress, who crosses swords with Robin for the first time and is re-established into the DC continuity.

DC supports this miniseries with a promotional kit similar to the exciting and groundbreaking kits for the first two Robin miniseries, consisting of the following:

* A counter display featuring the reversible cover art and utilizing the movement-enhanced cover technology.
* Two header/window cards advertising the movement-enhanced cover technology on one side and the ROBIN III logo on the other.
* An oversized poster.
* Giveaway pins featuring the Robin emblem.
* Stickers of the ROBIN III logo.

Additionally, for every 100 copies of *ROBIN III #1 Collector's Edition* initially ordered, retailers receive one exclusive enamel ROBIN III logo pin.

ROBIN III: CRY OF THE HUNTRESS is a 6-issue miniseries in the Standard Format, edited by Dennis O'Neil. Newsstand Editions are priced at $1.25. Collector's Editions are priced at $2.50. Issue #1 ships on November 3.

A Symphony In Moonlight...& Nightmares

Jon Muth's *(Moonshadow)* now classic rendition of *Dracula* is back in print in time for the movie! Probably one of the most beautiful graphic albums ever made with stunning watercolors, it is quite akin to Coppola's version in that it explores a much more chilling psychological and sensuous angle. This second edition will have a new cover and a much-improved art book-like presentation in a larger format with flaps. A special clothbound edition of *Dracula*, jacketed with a special tipped-in plate signed by Muth, is limited to 1,000 copies. The limited edition retails for $45. The regular edition, shipping in November, retails for $11.95.

COMIC NEWS

The Return Of The SPACE PATROL!

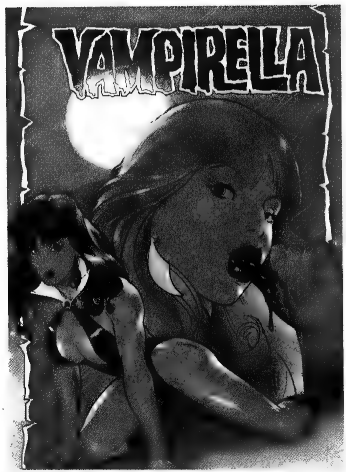
Travel into the future with Buzz Corry, commander in chief of...the *Space Patrol*!

This introduction to the 1950-1956 television show Space Patrol shows that though the values of the '50s generation may be outdated, their stories and comic books are classics. Forty years after the release of the original *Space Patrol #1*, a new *Space Patrol #1* will be released. The writer and artist may be different, but the characters remain the same: the hero Buzz Corry; his copilot Cadet Happy; Security Chief of the Universe Robbie Robertson; former arch-villainess-turned-Space Patrol ally Tonga; Secretary General of the United Patrol Mr. Carlysle; and his daughter Carol, who is hopelessly in love with Corry. Even the Corry's arch-enemy Prince Baccarratti, aka The Black Falcon, appears in the new Space Patrol.

According to writer Chris Weppler, the first *Space Patrol #1* hit the stands to a warm welcome in July of 1952. "Fans loved it!" he said. *Space Patrol #2* came out in December of '52. Though issues #3, #4, and part of #5 were completed, they were never published.

In the 30th century, five worlds Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Mercury, and Venus banded together to form the United Planets of the Universe, an Earth-based organization resembling the ancient United Nations. Though inhabitants of the U.P. co-existed in peace, they needed protection from an assortment of space scoundrels. They formed an interplanetary military force called the Space Patrol and based it on an artificial planetoid between Earth and Mars, called the Terra Station. Terra Station was built out of the soils of all of Earth's nations, symbolizing the "one world" concept.

Space Patrol #1, will hit the stands in November 1992.



Harris Comics Returns with Vampirella

Harris Comics debuted in the summer of 1991, reprinting the classic horror favorites *Creepy* and *Vampirella* in trade paperback format, followed by new versions of those books in a prestige Black and White format. Earlier efforts were distributed to the direct market by Dark Horse Comics.

While the properties acquired from Warren Publishing (*Creepy, Eerie* and *Vampirella*) form the cornerstone of the "Harris Horror Universe", the goal is to expand their comics offerings in the horror, suspense and adventure genres, providing quality entertainment with mass appeal.

Starting in November, Harris is premiering the first of a line of lower-priced, saddle-stitched deluxe format comics In Full Color. Leading the way in the new Harris line will be *Vampirella*, in her own color monthly comic book, followed by new title with today's top talent. *Vampirella #1* will feature a cover by Adam Hughes. Writer Kurt Busiek and exciting new talent Louis Small, Jr. detail Vampirella's adventures as she travels to secrecy-shrouded Europe to confront Dracula, Lord of the Vampires! Redeem the certificate in each issue to receive a special limited edition poster of Vampirella by Dave Stevens! You should really check this out! A perfect opportunity for new readers to get on the Vampirella bandwagon for the first time.

COMIC NEWS

Lomax Launches Bloodbath at Khe Sanh

The creator of *Vietnam Journal, Desert Storm Journal, Tet '68* and now author of *The 'Nam* debuts his latest mini-series from Apple Comics, *Vietnam Journal: Bloodbath at Khe Sanh*. This special four-issue series details the 77-day seige of the American firebase at Khe Sanh, one of the war's most controversial battles. By it's end, 205 American Marines lay dead and 1,602 North Vietnamese bodies littered the battlefield (with General William Westmoreland estimating the North's total losses at 10,000-15,000). During the siege, U.S. planes, dropping 5,000 bombs a day, exploded the equivalent of five Hiroshima-sized atomic bombs in the area. By the time reporter Scott "Journal" Neithamer arives at the beseiged base - where some 20,000 enemy soldiers massed outside the perimeter already holding the camp in a death grip - nerves are frayed, tempers are short and the fear is as real as the constant rain of rocket, mortar, and artillery fire. This issue's "The Massacre of Company B" relates one of the most poignant moments of the siege. *Vietnam Journal: Bloodbath at Khe Sanh # 1* ships in November.

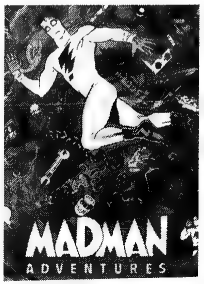
Macross II: Comics, and Animation Video

Macross II, the sequel to the Macross Saga in the Robotech series, is emerging as a unique project. With a rare timeliness, *Macross II's* original animation video series, will be released nearly simultaneously in North America and Japan, Volume 1 of the English-language three-volume video series will be released by U.S. Renditions in September. Since Viz Comic's adaptation series is timed for *Macross II's* entry into the direct market, Viz has linked with U.S. Renditions for a major joint promotion that will feature large scale advertising in various trade publications, as well as attention-grabbing graphics in a color poster/flyer and two unique color postcards. Three promotional efforts and the huge appetite whetted worldwide by the initial Macross series have accelerated anticipation among manga and anime fans in North America to a fevered pitch!

Madman Adventures Timewarp Poster

Tundra gives you 38 of comics' most exciting creators on one poster! Has there ever been a poster with 38 top creators on it? We think not. Here's your chance to own a copy of one of the most truly incredible and unique items to see print in a long, long time.

Hours of fun await you because this is not just one of the coolest art pieces of all time, it's a contest, too! You'll have a chance to win valuable Madman prizes if you can identify who drew what on this beautiful full "pop-art" color poster. Don't even think about not buying a *Madman Adventures Timewarp Poster*! Clear your mind for one moment and try to picture these creators on one poster... Dave Stevens, Todd McFarlane, Paul Chadwick, Mike Mignola, Paul Mavrides, Art Adams, Charles Burns, Mark Schultz, Kelley Jones, Jim Woodring, The Pander Brothers, Dan Clowes, Richard Sala, Geoff Darrow, Steve Rude, Al Columbia, Mark Bode, Matt Wagner and of course the master mind himself, Mike Allred. Signed and numbered by Mike Allred.



COMIC NEWS

H.R. Giger's Necronomicon II

Published by Morpheus International, this remarkable, eye-popping volume is the companion to Giger's first amazing *Necronomicon* art book! In it are nearly 200 reproductions of paintings, sculptures and photos - most in full color. It's filled with autobiographical text, interviews, essays and an extensive bibliography and also includes many of Giger's startling production designs for Alien and other film projects! *Necronomicon II* is a 12" x 17" hardcover with foil-stamped dust jacket. It retails for $69.50.

The Tease From Tennessee

Betty Page, cult goddess of the 50's, is back yet again it seems! To herald this event, Pure Imagination offers *The Betty Pages Annual Vol. 2*! This new companion book is hot on the heels of their first sell-out volume. It's The Master Betty Checklist, with extensive data on each entry. Dozens of features are reproduced from the rare original editions. Plus, erotic artist Eric Stanton in an extensive interview, illustrated with some of hi greatest work. Betty fans, new and old, won't want to miss this one. Also, the color is fully painted by Greg Theakston in a style reminiscient of Frank Frazetta! It retails for $24.95 and ships in November.

Also from Pure Imagination is *Pure Images #5* starring everyone's favorite dog and cat team, *Ren and Stimpy*! Meet the creators of America's coolest new cartoon show: those Spumco Maniacs! The creation of Captain America is the topic of their second feature. Plus, eight pages of *The Human Powerhouse* in color, by Greg Theakston.

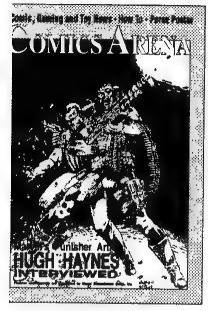
Mars Attacks Comics

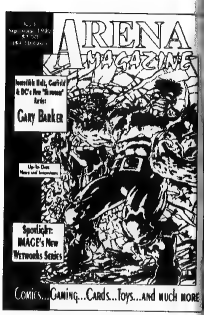
The 1962 series of *Mars Attacks* gum cards has achieved legendary status among collectors and SF fans. These cards, featuring the spectacular painting of Golden Age illustrator Norm Saunders, are valued higher than any other non-sports card series ever published by Topps.

Fans will be pleased to know that in 1993 Topps will introduce an all new series of *Mars Attacks* color comics - complete with newly created cards bagged inside - as well as a deluxe quality reissue of the 1962 55-card set printed from the original negatives. Shipping mid '93.

Attention Publishers !

If you want to get your news, any news, in our magazine direct your press releases to *Arena Magazine, Att: Editor, 264 Main St., Florence, KY 41042* and mark it Press Release! THANKS!!





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BART SEARS INTERVIEWED

Lurking in the Shadows with Bart Sears

Bart Sears answered the phone after twenty rings. He had been outside and had accidentally locked the front door so he had to sprint all the way to the back of his home and to the phone. By the time I was ready to hang up, he answered the repeated rings in an obviously winded state. After introductions and a tense reminder about the interview, Bart growled and then we began.

AM: *Hello, Bart. How are you?*

Bart: Next question (laughs).

AM: (Laughs). *Sorry about the timing. Okay, to begin, how did Bart Sears bust onto the comics scene?*

Bart: I broke in first a long time ago. I had some samples and I took them up to Marvel and it bounced around to a lot of different editors. They all liked my stuff but I didn't get any work.

AM: *A familiar process.*

Bart: Yeah, but finally Larry Hama gave me a couple short eight page stories for the doomed to die, uh, Savage Tales. Thankfully, they were never printed. After that I did a Sectaurs toy book that was doomed to die and it was never printed either. The toy was cancelled before it ever got printed.

AM: *Bad luck, huh?*

Bart: After that, David Campiti who was working for Pied Piper told me about Hero Alliance.

AM: *That's the first project you actually got printed?*

Bart: Yeah.

AM: *Was there any schooling involved before that?*

Bart: I went to a year of the Joe Kubert School of Cartoon and Graphic Arts in New Jersey.

AM: *How was that?*

Bart: Ah, it was good. A lot of talented teachers there.

AM: *You would recommend the school for other artists?*

Bart: Any serious artist, yeah. If you're looking for something to do...don't go to a community college because that's a waste.

AM: *Growing up, were you a fan of comics?*

Bart: I was never a collector but I was a fan of heroic stories...comics were a cheap way to get that.

AM: *Any characters that grabbed you?*

Bart: I always loved Batman, as a kid. I always used to go to the corner store where they had all the comics with the covers ripped

off and I'd get 20 for a buck. I'd go there and spend three bucks a week.

AM: *And spend the rest of the week reading. You said that your first work was on Hero Alliance. If somebody wanted to go back and pick those up, what would they look for?*

Bart: Well, the first one...was published as a graphic album...pretty good-sized.

AM: *That was The first thing. Now, skipping ahead, what was your favorite project to work on?*

Bart: The favorite project I ever did was the Conan Portfolio with SQP Productions.

AM: *Oh, yeah! That was great stuff. Is that your best?*

Bart: At the time it was. It's three or four years old now...I'd love to do some more, but, uh (downcast) there just wasn't enough money in it, quite frankly.

AM: *That was before the major companies?*

Bart: Yeah, I started that before I started with DC. It was while I was working at Hasbro, doing toys. I did all the COPS figures and some G.I. Joes. That's how I got into DC. They were gonna do a COPS comic and they came up and I sat in on a meeting with Helfer and Doug Moench and Helfer liked the stuff. I did a couple of COPS fill-ins and from there I was suppose to do Spectre Monthly, something about the Invasion stuff. I did the last issue of that and some covers.

AM: *So that was basically your "in".*

Bart: Yeah, while I was working at Hasbro I was also doing stuff for Quality Comics on the Dredd stuff, Rogue Trooper and Slaine.

AM: *What were your artistic influences growing up?*

Bart: At the time, I'd say Neal Adams and John Buscema...Neal on Batman and Buscema on Conan. I definitely liked their

stuff more than anyone else. Now, I like Steve Rude. He's about the only guy I buy, I don't really buy comics much. Oh, and Brian Bolland.

AM: *Not many artists it seems are collectors. Do you wonder why that is?*

Bart: Hmmm...I know I'm not a collector. Most of my comics are on the floor, ripped and torn. They're just a tool.

AM: *A working basis?*

Bart: Yeah, and cheap entertainment.

AM: Now that you've gained a formidable amount of prestige, if you had your choice of people to work with, who would you choose?

Bart: I'd like to work with Moench on Batman, I think. Oh, gosh, let's see...hmmm, I'm not real good with names.

AM: *Any inkers?*

Bart: Uh, Scott Williams can really pull a fine line. My favorite inker on my stuff is Randy Elliot.

AM: *Who's been the most enjoyable to work with?*

Bart: Definitely Michael Eury.

AM: *Alright. Let's talk about the Bart Sears Drawing Technique. People may have an idea from your column in Wizard, Brutes and Babes. How exactly do you go about it?*

Bart: That's a tough one. I taught for a year at the Kubert School a year or two ago and it's really tough to put into words because I've never had to formularize it or explain it.

AM: *You do it quite eloquently in your column, however.*

Bart: Thanks.

AM: *You use an interesting method, the bubble method. It sort of explains the particular style you have with your figures.*

Bart: I build with masses and forms.

AM: *It seems you have to have a very adept understanding of anatomy to employ your method.*

Bart: Uh-huh. And it's hard to explain in two pages so they're giving me three and four now.

AM: *Great. How many pages do you crank a day?*

Bart: Well, it depends on the project. On Eclipso: The Darkness Within, I'm just wrapping up the second issue, and that's a major pain in the butt for everyone involved because there's so many characters. And the method I'm using takes a long time. It looks easy...a lot of solid blacks and a bunch of straight lines, but it takes forever. It takes more than a day a page, sometimes two days a page, and it's taking just as long for an inker to ink it. Six pages had to be farmed out to be inked so it could make the deadline scheduled. Randy Elliot finished off four pages from my roughs and Kieth Giffen finished off two more. It takes too long.

AM: *With the different style, you mean, or with all the different characters?*

Bart: A combination of both.

AM: *Are you happy with this new style?*

Bart: In a way, but it's sort of unnatural for me to draw that way.

AM: *Did you develop it on*

your own?

Bart: Yeah. Actually I wanted something that would be quick (chuckles). I sort of put a nail in my head. It'll be the same style in the upcoming Eclipso monthly but it shouldn't take as long because it's going to be more like one and two panels a page with not as many characters. The first issue of that I'm doing two and more pages a day. On the Justice League, once I was used to the characters, I was doing three pages a day.

AM: *Jamming 'em out.*

Bart: Yeah. The background style sort of got set in my mind, buildings and stuff, and I didn't have to reference as much. That, at first, was a real pain since it was set in Europe.

AM: *That's true.*

Bart: There's surprisingly few books that deal with Paris that show you anything and London was even tougher. My editor went out and spent an afternoon looking for books and all he found was one book on London. That was great for a couple of shots but you got to draw street scenes and I still don't know what the street detail is, or cars or any of that crap. Quite frankly, I didn't feel like spending two months looking.

AM: *Sounds reasonable. Talking about Eclipso: The Darkness Within, what interesting info can you give a reader who may not be following the saga too closely?*

Bart: Well, let's see...speaking about Eclipso himself, he's the favorite character I've ever worked on other than Conan. That's just because I've liked Conan for so long but Eclipso is right up there. As far as comic projects, it's my favorite to work on. He's so blatantly evil, which I really enjoy, and he doesn't lose. He hits a setback every now and then but he's not the kind of guy who loses, he's the god of ven-

geance. Eclipso's a real mean-ass, he doesn't pull punches and it's gonna be a bloody, brutal path that the monthly title cuts. The second issue of the monthly is something I wouldn't miss. As far as comic stories go, it's the best story I've ever worked on.

AM: *Do you think it's interesting that DC is going to go ahead and give an evil character a monthly series?*

Bart: Yeah.

AM: *Do you think the interest will be able to keep going?*

Bart: I think so...yeah. Kieth (Giffen) is really excited about Eclipso. He claims that this character is really going to rise up. And he's just twisted enough, I think, to keep it rolling.

AM: *So it will basically deal with these heroes who will come in and try to stop Eclipso from achieving his evil ends?*

Bart: No...the opposite. The series will focus on Eclipso. The heroes are secondary. It will be Eclipso... and then the heroes will show up. The first issue has no heroes in it at all. In the second issue I believe there's only a page devoted to the heroes or to Bruce Gordon who's devoting his life to destroying Eclipso. Bruce gets really beat up and almost killed in the second issue.

AM: *Before this mini-series and series the last major appearance with Eclipso was in the Phantom Stranger mini-series...*

Bart: Yeah. I'm not real familiar with it but it's nothing like that.

AM: *Totally new, totally different...a new look?*

Bart: Yeah, and what's neat is that he's not changed at all. I mean, it's not totally changed to where you can't relate, it's just that he's been lying all these past years and he's finally fed up with it and he's tired of waiting. He can Eclipse heroes so he's not scared of being destroyed.

AM: *This term "eclipse heroes", can you explain?*

Bart: He has these black diamonds, I guess there's a thousand of them, and each one contains a tiny piece of his essence. Every time we see him it's some magical, mystical form of himself that either he changes the character, takes control of the person or he can manifest their evil thoughts into something that he can control. He can form something out of their evil thoughts if they're too good and he can't take them.

He needs to get all of these thousand gems together. They were one big gem and it was all cut up, and he needs to get all these together and destroy them all at once and that will free him. He's basically imprisoned in these gems.

AM: *And once he's free?*

Bart: Then he's really out there. Eclipso is incredibly powerful. All that stuff on the moon, that's just his mystical essence, that's not him. He's still in the gem. It's just that he was banished to the dark side of the moon and he has some kind of hold there. He can form something there just as long as there's a gem.

AM: *It's going to be wild to see how he goes about it.*

Bart: Yeah, the first storyline has him taking over a small South American country and that's his base of operations with all the druglords and people in power he's eclipsed. He poisons all their drugs and becomes a real nuisance. They try and oust him but it's kind of difficult because he has control of all the people in power. He has all their memories and thoughts and they're just trapped inside while he has control of them.

AM: *He's like an essence with visual form but can't be touched, a ghost?*

Bart: Right. His real visual form that you see on the moon can't be brought onto the Earth. Once that's done, he's completed his mission and he'll control the Earth and we can toy with the ideas of, uh, Elseworlds which will start with the second book of The Darkness Within. He'd win.

AM: *Ah, he'd win in the Elseworlds stuff?*

Bart: Yeah. Several heroes would be on the moon and there'll be a few deaths.

AM: *I don't think that would*

be a very nice place to live.

Bart: No, I don't think so.

AM: *Fun to read, though.*

Bart: Yeah, I love him because he's an ancient being and I can draw him with swords and stuff and they don't mind.

AM: *That's Conan spilling over, huh?*

Bart: Yeah. That's a medieval quirk in my mind that I can't let go of.

AM: *Give me a brief catchphrase for the Eclipso series.*

Bart: Hmmm...I don't know, uh, Blood, Guts and Revenge?

AM: *Okay, good. Blood, Guts and Revenge. That's what got you interested, isn't it?*

Bart: Of course. I wouldn't have done it if he wasn't violent. He doesn't let people go. If he gets you, you're got. No more toying around. He doesn't sit there giggling in the corner.

AM: *He's tired of that crap.*

Bart: Yeah, he doesn't need to put on a facade anymore. He's discovered how powerful he is.

AM: *Great.*

Bart: Everybody's running scared.

AM: *It reminds me a bit, correct me if I'm wrong, of the early Demon stuff by DC. The Demon was taking over Hell and wasn't pulling any punches.*

Bart: Sort of, yeah, but it's a little more based in reality, I guess. It's Eclipso on Earth doing about the same thing as the Demon but it's a little more gory because this is regular people he's doing it to and not demons.

AM: *You have any future projects, Bart, that you want to let the readers know about?*

Bart: Well, we've been talking about an Eclipso/Lobo prestige format book.

AM: *That would be something.*

Bart: Yeah, I'm really looking forward to that.

AM: *Do they team up or go against each other?*

Bart: They go at it. Lobo's in the second chapter of the current crossover and he's in and out of the annuals but he gets written out at the end it seems. We need to figure out a way to get him on the moon and he and Eclipso can duke it out. He couldn't figure out what the other heroes will be doing except dying. I want to save most of it because it's something special. I'm not real sure if it's going to go over because Michael Eury left DC and he was hot for the crossover. Now, (Dan) Raspler has control of it and, I don't know, he keeps talking about a Lobo/Creeper mini. I'd rather do Lobo/Eclipso myself.

AM: *If it ends up being Lobo/Creeper will you be in on that?*

Bart: Yeah. I need to call him and see what's what.

AM: *I hope you get what you want. Once an artist like Bart Sears gets excited about a project then "world watch out".*

Bart: Thanks.

AM: *What other interests outside of comics do you have?*

Bart: Movies. Action/adventure stuff like Terminator and Star Wars. I like horror, too. Stuff with intensity and lots of suspense.

AM: *Books?*

Bart: Yeah, I like Stephen King, and Conan books and Tarzan. Fantasy and sorcery stuff... I don't get to read that much.

AM: *I can imagine. Have you seen the new Tarzan that Malibu's doing?*

Bart: All I saw was a poster that Bisley did and that was pretty neat. I don't have any high hopes for it. Nobody seems to make adaptations that are worth a crap. I'm not sure the art team is right but, uh, I don't know for sure, exactly.

AM: *That wraps it up. I'll let you get back to what you were doing.*

Bart: Okay. Thanks. See ya'.

JERRY'S TOP 10

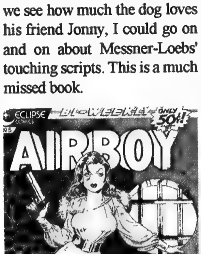
Top 10 Comics No Longer Being Published

by Jerry Smith

Ever really get into a TV show or comic, only to have it pulled out from under you just as it was giving you the most pleasure? Happens to me all the time. I don't watch much television, but it seems like everytime I find a show that is worth giving up an hour of my free time for, it is of such high quality that it's cancelled immediately. Remember *Police Squad, Bay City Blues, The Flash*, or the new *DarkShadows*? Winners all, and none of them lasted a year. For every *Cheers* that succeeds, ten *Twin Peaks* crash and burn. It's just not fair.

The same thing happens in comics, albeit to a lesser degree. Comic companies can usually afford to put out a comic that doesn't sell well far longer than a network can support a show with a strong following but low ratings. But good books are still cancelled, for a variety of reasons, and it's usually one of my favorite comics that gets the ax. The following is a list of my favorite comics that, for one reason or another, are no longer being published.

10. **Jonny Quest** — I loved the cartoon as a kid, I loved the comic book as an adult. This is where I first discovered the work of William Messner-Loebs, one of the finest writers of current comics. Messner-Loebs took the concept of the cartoon and totally fleshed out the characters. He made Professor Quest, Race, Jonny, Hadji, and even Bandit three-dimensional, enjoyable characters. So many of his stories on JQ will stick with me for the rest of my life: the ghost story with references to all kinds of writers and classic stories hidden in the dialogue, the origin of Hadji, the Bandit solo story where we see how much the dog loves his friend Jonny, I could go on and on about Messner-Loebs' touching scripts. This is a much missed book.



9. **Airboy** — When Eclipse Publishing was playing around with super hero comics, they were one of the few companies to do it right. *Airboy* had some of the best talents in the industry contribute to it, including Tim Truman and Chuck Dixon. This made *Airboy* one of the most fun comics on this list. Airboy was Davey Nelson, son of the original Airboy, a young World War II flying ace. Davey's famous father was murdered in the first issue, and Davey vowed to take up his mantle as a crimefighter.

The most special thing about *Airboy* was the charasmatic supporting cast. No tough guy was ever written better than Skywolf, the hard-drinking, no nonsense civilian pilot who was Davey's friend and mentor. Chuck Dixon was inside this guy's mind when he wrote him; every bit of dialogue, every situation he found himself in rang true. Chuck Dixon said he based Skywolf on his father. If so, his father must have been a hell of a man.

Next was Davey's love interest, Valkyrie. This beautiful Teutonic bombshell started out on the wrong side of the tracks during WWII, but a kiss or two from the original Airboy (and a dose of seeing Hitler's brutality up close) led her to the right track. Held in suspended animation since the end of the war, Davey's first mission as Airboy was to rescue her. Tough as nails and absolutely beautiful, she was a sexy feminist before Michelle Pfeiffer made it cool.

To round out the cast there was Hirada, Davey's Japanese friend and trainer. Hirada had a lot of history with the original Airboy, and he was only to happy to help his friend's son to avenge

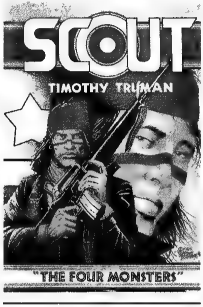
his murder.

Airboy did everything from fight the malicious Misery in his realm of death to take on a gang of giant, motorcycle riding, talking rats. The bottom line of all this is that the book was loads of fun. The writers never took anything too seriously, yet the book was so much more than one long fight scene. It was always a book that gave me more pleasure than the cover price.

The problem with ending *Airboy* (pay attention, Eclipse) was, besides loosing a wonderful comic, it ended in the middle of a story! Airboy had just finished his grandest mission, his final battle with Misery. Everything was fine, then the cast was transported back to earth, minus Airboy. What happened?! That was supposed to be the next big plotline, but the book ended before it could be explored. I cornered Chuck Dixon at a comic convention about this, and he said he would like to finish the story someday. I'd like you to, Chuck. I'd really like you to.

8. **Hero Alliance** - Sure, I know it's not officially cancelled, but at this point I despair of ever seeing another issue of this excellent comic. The *Hero Alliance* featured the all powerful Victor, the Superman of the 90's. Victor is as powerful as the Man of Steel, but he is more than an archetype, he's a living, breathing, regular guy with all sorts of thoughts and emotions other heroes don't have at the big companies. Victor is the leader of the Hero Alliance, a group of heroes who set the standard for excellence in super group books.

Of all the new super group books that have sprung up in the last half a decade, Hero Alliance is the best. Co-creator David Campiti has treated this comic as his baby, featuring only the finest art and stories in its seventeen issue (as of this writing) run. His attention to art and detail show in this comic. The characters are interesting and fun (including the mysterious, Batman-like Sentry, Gossamer, the former crack-addict from the bad part of town, and Victor's girlfriend, Golden Guardman's daughter Kris Dunlop). They are all real people with real problems, who enjoy working as a group. The plots are adult enough to be sophisticated and fast moving enough to make this one of the best comics (formerly) on the market.



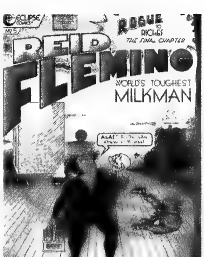
7. **Scout** - The books that made Tim Truman a writer who draws instead of just a dynamite artist. The *Scout* books took place over about ten years, featuring native American Emanuel Santana as Scout.

The first *Scout* series had Santana wandering the near future United States, killing monsters, bad guys, and anyone else who got in his way. *Scout* introduced some of the most memorable supporting characters in recent comics history, including Beau LaDuke and Doody the cult leader. Most memorable LaDuke scene: LaDuke blowing away attacking Ninjas, shouting "Eat lead, pajama boy!"

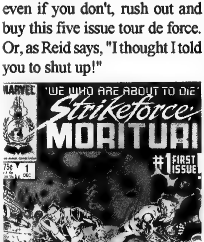
Scout did more than just give readers some of the best characters in comics, the book also gave us storylines that were scary as hell. In Scout, the future was hardly a utopia. The United States was basically a desert. Japan fought with Mexico to see who would control North America. There was not much left in America except large amounts of nuclear weapons. Enter into this picture Scout, an Apache indian with a mission, to kill the six monsters of Apache legend. With his spirit guide, he manages to kill all six, who are all masquerading as humans. Is Scout a psychotic killing innocent people, or are the people he kills evil monsters only he can see?

The second *Scout* series, *Scout: War Shaman*, takes place about ten years after the original Scout. Santana has been married and has two children, one with psychic powers so intense that a cult tries to kidnap him to use for their own agenda. This story revolves around Santana's attempt to keep his family together despite deteriorating conditions in America. And, of course we have the essential guest appearance of that Western he-man, Beau LaDuke.

The ending of *Scout: War Shaman* is sad and poignant, but it leaves things open for a world of new stories. Truman has left us begging for more, hopefully it's only a matter of time before he finishes his finest story.



6. **Reid Fleming, The Worlds Toughest Milkman** - Only the funniest comic book of all time. If you've got a sense of humor, or, even if you don't, rush out and buy this five issue tour de force. Or, as Reid says, "I thought I told you to shut up!"



5. **Strikeforce: Morituri** - One of the most original comics I've ever read, and one of the saddest. This comic could evoke emotions from its readers like few other comic books.

Strikeforce: Morituri was created by Peter B. Gillis and drawn by Brent Anderson. Here's the premise: In the near future (isn't it funny how many books take place in the near future? What's wrong with the far-flung future?) a race of really ugly aliens put their fleet in orbit around earth, then stay there to rape and pillage. They don't invade Earth outright, they prefer to milk Earth's resources by stealing booty and brutally murdering anyone who tries to stop them.

What may Earth do to fight such ruffians? Easy. We grow our own defense force of super powered heroes to fight off the more powerful and advanced aliens. A scientist comes up with a formula to create such supermen, trouble is, one side effect of the serum is to kill the subject off within a year. Any volunteers? Plenty. Thus the crux of the series: Peter Gillis makes the reader feel every eventual death like it was our best friend. These people are all heroes, willing to give all to defend their planet. They come from all backgrounds, creeds, religions, races and colors. They all have different personalities, powers, costumes, and reasons for being there. But in the end, they all die.

It would have been easy to use these characters' deaths for cheap effect or an easy story ending, but Gillis never did. The serum would take a leader, a follower, a jerk or a nice guy without warning. They went in the middle of battles with the aliens. They went in transit to space. They went in their sleep. And each death meant something. Each death built up more hatred and frustration with the invading aliens. Each death made the audience realize what heroes these people were, the kinds of sacrifices the were making. One wanted to be a writer and kept a journal until he died. Another was a devout Christian and took solace in the fact she fought for what was right until she went to Heaven. Others died screaming, but their sacrifices were just as valid.

Gillis wrote superior plots to match his maudlin premise. One story dealt with an escaped alien on the run kidnapping a black family and making them drive him cross country. Impressed with the human's honor and devotion to his family, the alien let the family live due to his twisted sense of honor. Another story had the scientist who invented the Morituri serum try another tack to appeal for help. He walked into the middle of a field and set up a beacon, broadcasting a message for help out into space. The beacon was never mentioned again, but the desperation of the scientist to try such a potentially useless gesture permeated the series.

Strikeforce Morituri's excellence lasted only as long as Peter B. Gillis and Brent Anderson were on the series. It should have been cancelled as soon as that team left, because the following issues until the book was cancelled were shadows of the real thing. The first twenty or so issues belong in the comic hall of fame.

Now we come to perhaps the most missed books of all, the First comics. To this day I'm not sure what happened to First Comics, it seems like one day they were publishing comics and the next day they were gone. While they were publishing, they put out some of the best.

4. **Lone Wolf & Cub** - I gave all the manga (Japanese comics) a try when they became a fad in the late eighties, but this was the only one (besides the excellent *Mai, the Psychic Girl*) that really caught on with me. What a great book. This was the story of Lone Wolf, the Shogun's main executioner until he was betrayed by a rival clan, his wife murdered, and he was forced to adopt a life on the run as an assassin for hire. He wheeled his infant son with him during battle in a baby cart (hmmmm.... I wonder if that's where Fabian Nicieza got the idea for Nomad and Bucky?).

Lone Wolf doesn't sound too stable, but his world isn't either. He is constantly taking on dangerous jobs and running from the Shogun's troops. He is a magnificient and feared warrior, who is feared throughout medieval Japan, even by the Shogun himself.

This book was so much more than a Japanese adventure story. Every thick issue told a lesson about the preciousness of life, the glory of honor, or what people will do to be free. It was about a man unjustly persecuted for crimes he didn't commit. It was even the story of a father's love for his son, and the hard choices the father had to make for his son to survive. It was expertly written and beautifully drawn. And, it had an ending. Lone Wolf had a final battle with his enemies, the Yagyu clan. Unfortunately, I'll never get to see it. First stopped publishing the book with the majority of the story left to be told. I desperately hope another publisher someday takes up where First left off. I have invested a lot in this series, and I would like to see what kind of people these characters finally develop into.

3. **Jon Sable, Freelance** - Mike Grell's work on *Green Arrow* is good, but he put his heart and soul into Jon Sable. People always talk about realistic comics, but Sable was one of the most realistic books ever published. There really could have been a Jon Sable. Almost.

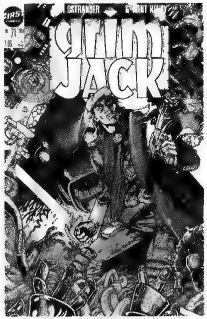
Sable was Mike Grell's dream character, a protagonist whom Grell could turn into the hero closest, I think, to his true self. Sable was a Viet Nam vet who was actually a pretty normal guy, with a pretty wife and two normal kids. Then one day his family was brutally murdered by men trying to get at Sable. Sable went temporarily insane, tracked down the men who committed the crime, and killed them, one by one.

Then Sable's life totally changed. Using his army skills, he hired himself out as a mercenary, bodyguard, whatever his client needed. In a most memorable first issue, Sable was hired by then President Reagan as a personal bodyguard. Sable, being Sable, forced the President to show his American Express Card to prove his identity.

There was no better adventure writer than Mike Grell on *Jon Sable*. Grell took Sable on missions in Israel, the jungles of Africa, and the jungles of Chicago, but mostly kept his hero in the city, dealing with everything from trigger happy rookie cops to nuclear threats at the Olympics.

Somewhere in the 50's, Grell's interest in the character started to wane, and when the art chores were turned over to another artist, it was time for Sable to retire his Mauser (his handgun of choice). The series lasted fifty-six issues, and remains Mike Grell's best body of work.

The less said about the follow up series, Sable, or the short-lived Sable television series, the better. Iron Mike had little to do with either, besided providing soul and inspiration. I suppose sometimes that just isn't enough.



2. **Grimjack** - One of the finest creations in any medium, ever. John Ostrander and Timothy Truman managed to bring to life one of the toughest, meanest, most popular characters ever to spring from a four color page. John Gaunt was a doomed hero from the start. He never knew his mother, was abused by his father, hated by his jealous brothers, and condemned at twelve to the arena. He nonetheless grew up to be an honorable and formidable warrior. He lived a life of pain and misery, but he loved his friends, hated his enemies (and boy did he have a lot of them), and never did

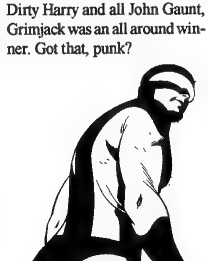
a man wrong until he was wronged first (well, usually).

Gaunt's adventures took place in the interdimensional city of Cynosure, the place where all dimensions eventually meet. He carried a gun and a sword, because you never knew when you would wander into a city block where firearms didn't work. Or magic did. Gaunt was a gun-for-hire, and he narrated all of his stories in Raymond Chandler type fashion. His tough, hard-bitten way of telling a story made the reader see through his facade of being a heartless cynic and made people realize that deep down he was a thoughtful, caring cynic.

A lot of diehard, rabid Grimjack fans were shocked when writer John Ostrander killed off the Grimmer. We couldn't believe such a great character was murdered. Shot in the back, no less, by an old enemy. It was not the end of the saga though. In an unusual move, John Gaunt was brought back. In the next issue, the entire storyline was bumped two hundred years in the future. John Gaunt was now Jim Twilley, son of a wealthy Cynosure banker. In the first issue of this new storyline, Jimmy-boy realizes who he is and sets out to do something about it. What he does isn't pretty, as he reclaims Munden's, the bar he previously owned, and mutilates himself with that trademark Grimjack facial scar.

Not many writers could get away with changing their total storyline and supporting cast, but Grimjack only got better.

The bottom line is, there has to be a future for *Grimjack*. The character is too good to just fade into comic limbo. In fact, I'm shocked a hip comic company like Dark Horse or Innovation hasn't picked up the title yet. We'd only see one issue a year, but that's better than nothing. I have heard the rumor that the rights for Grimjack himself are up for grabs, but the rights for *Cynosure*, created by Peter B. Gillis (there's that name again), are seperate. Since Cynosure is such a key to the Grimjack Universe, the two can't really be seperated for the title to work. I hope someone fixes this soon, cause I miss my *Grimjack* fix. Part hard-boiled detective, part Dirty Harry and all John Gaunt, Grimjack was an all around winner. Got that, punk?



1. **Nexus** - I saved the best for last. Another First Comics publication, *Nexus* was, and is, simply put, the best continuously published comic book of all time. If you enjoy any comic book in the slightest, you are cheating yourself out of a world of pleasure if you don't own a complete set of Nexus comics.

Nexus is the creation of Mike Baron and Steve Rude, two of the masters of sequential art. Capitol Comics asked Baron to create a super hero comic for them. Instead, he did something better. Baron created *Nexus. Nexus* is a killer of mass murderers, the conscience of the human race. His name is Horatio Hellpop, and he dreams of the crimes of mass murderers. When he wakes, he is compelled to seek them out and kill them. No killer can escape the Nexus, sometimes he finds them years after the crime has been comitted. Often they have forged a new identity and a comfortable life for themselves, far from the scene of their crimes. Some have new families and homes, and have all but forgotten about their criminal pasts. Nexus reminds them. No one is safe from his power, and murderers throught the galaxy fear his name. His first victim was his own father.

Nexus has fusion powers absorbed from the stars, so his power is nearly limitless. His power was granted by the Merk, a mysterious alien who has set himself up as jury for the human race. Nexus is the executioner.

Horatio Hellpop is ambivalent about being the Nexus, and this fact sets up the dichotomy of the book. Horatio is essentially a peace loving vegetarian who just happens to be the best at what he does. And that is being Nexus. He was sickened by the job enough to quit recently, but that caused the Merk to go crazy and hire a succession of mercenaries and sociopaths for the job. Horatio had to assume the mantle of Nexus again in order to stop the Merk's latest choice, Prof. Stan Korvitsky. Stan had become drunk on the Nexus power and had started murdering innocents. Horatio came out of retirement in order to stop to Stan. It didn't take very long.

When the First series ended at #80, Horatio had once again assumed the mantle of Nexus.

I did receive some good news about this series recently. *Nexus* is coming back. Dark Horse has wised up and kept this fantastic book from comic limbo. The only team that should ever do *Nexus* will be doing the book: Mike Baron and Steve Rude. If anyone was foolish enough to miss this book the first time around, DON'T

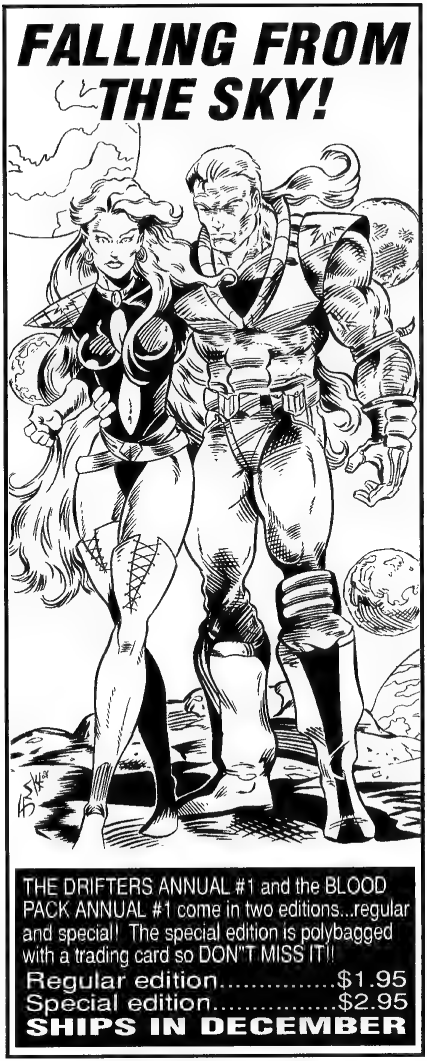
miss it this time. Baron and Rude are redoing Nexus' origin, and it would be a perfect jumping on point for new readers. Buy it. Or, in the immortal words of Nexus, "This calls for hyperspeed!"

It's a shame that out of all the books on this list, only one (it's the best, true) is making its way back onto the comics market. Is the market that competitive that bland books like *Ghost Rider* are successful, while extra-ordinary books like *Strikeforce: Morituri* languish in obscurity?

As a final point, I'd like to point out that most of these books are recent enough to find in the back issue bins at your local comic book store. Any issue of any of the titles I've mentioned is worth whatever your retailer is charging for it, but most of them are dirt cheap as back issues go. So, next time you realize you don't have the money for the latest stupid gimmick comic published to grab your money, buy the first ten issues of the original *Nexus*. Or pick a good *Jonny Quest*, any one will do. Or laugh out loud with *Reid Fleming*. You won't regret it.

Top 10
Runner-Up Titles

10. **Warlord**
9. **Suicide Squad**
8. **Whisper**
7. **Tomb Of Dracula**
6. **Master Of Kung-Fu**
5. **Grendel** (Hunter Rose or Christine Spar version)
4. **The Prowler**
3. **Blackhawk**
2. **American Flagg**
1. **Badger**


FALLING FROM THE SKY!
THE DRIFTERS ANNUAL #1 and the BLOOD PACK ANNUAL #1 come in two editions...regular and special! The special edition is polybagged with a trading card so DON"T MISS IT!!
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SHIPS IN DECEMBER

PREVIEW

TARZAN: THE BECKONING

By Tom Yeates

published by Malibu Comics

Covington Cross: Back to the Past

A review of ABC's new medieval saga **by Jerry Smith**

Who cares about history, man? We have a story to tell! Described by ABC Television as a "family show", Covington Cross appears to be a 1992 family who time traveled back to 14th century England. Basically, the show is a medieval Bonanza, with Lorne Greene's part being played by Nigel Terry.

Covington Cross is a drama about a knight, Sir Thomas Gray (Terry), raising his three sons and beautiful daughter, Eleanor (Ione Skye), alone, since his wife was killed by the Plague. Although pushed as a period piece, Covington Cross is as contemporary as the world outside your window.

In the first episode, Sir Thomas' rival, John Mullens, proposes an end to past hostilities. He wishes to join their families by a marriage of Eleanor and his son. A reluctant Sir Thomas, under pressure from the king for all Englishmen to unite, agrees. Eleanor, in love with a commoner, isn't quite willing to sacrifice that much for the crown. She runs away with her true love.

Sir Thomas, under pressure from Eleanor and his soon-to-be girlfriend, Lady Elizabeth, breaks the engagement. John Mullens is furious. He intended nefarious uses for the the land his family would receive for Eleanor's dowry. He challenges Sir Thomas to a duel, but not with him... with his evil son. Although duplicity is involved, the Gray children discover the ruse to kill their father and rush to the duel just in time to fight the brigands as a family.

Exciting stuff. Actually CC isn't a bad show. It could use a lot more historical accuracy, and that is the the show's biggest fault.

There is too much talk on the show about Sir Thomas being "a man of his time" or "a victim of his time". It's just the sort of revisionist thing a writer in 1992 would write when speaking of arranged marriages or fighting duels in the streets. Of course these people are trapped in their time, just like we're all trapped in 1992! But they didn't think of it that way. Tradition might have been questioned, it always has been, but not with the odd insight these characters have. Of course arranged marriages are a horrible thing, but they were a fact of life in the 14th century. Eleanor fights her betrothal like a true 1992 feminist. Her outright refusal to go along with tradition may make 1992 audiences stand up and cheer, but 600 years ago it probably would have earned her a good beating and a night without supper to think about her folly.

The one thing that bothered me the most about Covington Cross was Sir Thomas' breaking of the engagement to Mullens' son. No matter how we might think he's doing the right thing, no matter that Mullens' son was an evil butcher, Sir Thomas Gray GAVE HIS WORD. A knight was bound by a code of honor, and while all knights everywhere hardly kept their vows, Thomas Gray is an honorable man. Also, if an English lord had really broken his word to unite his family with another because "his daughter didn't feel like it", he would have been invaded, killed, and his possesions divided between the other lords and the crown, all with the king's blessing. You didn't just break your word in fuedal society and expect everyone to "understand". If Sir Thomas didn't want Eleanor to marry, he shouldn't have promised her hand in the first place.

The rest of this year's CC episodes will probably be just as entertaining but historically inaccurate. Blame executive producer Gil Grant, of Hull High fame. "We're not doing history here," explained Grant in a recent interview,"we're doing entertainment." Entertainment is great, but what's the problem with throwing in a little historical accuracy?

Covington Cross is a medieval show about a family with 1992 attitudes and values. If you want an entertaining lark with little interest in showing it like it was (but then, what movie or TV show ever really tells it like it was, in any time or culture?), Covington Cross is your kind of show.

2099 - A BOLD NEW VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF THE MARVEL UNIVERSE

by Dan DiDio

"The "New" New Universe"...Not!" "2099 is nothing like the New Universe series of books. This world is different from the world outside your window and our characters don't apologize for being super-heroes." And with that opening statement Joey Cavalieri, sole editor of Marvel's new series of 2099 books, has separated himself from Marvel's much heralded and ill fated New Universe series.

2099 will be a self contained universe consisting of four titles set in the definitive version of the Marvel Universe future. Three of the books give a new slant to a familiar name while the fourth, is a new character written and created by an old, familiar friend.

Universe Beginnings When

Tom DeFalco and Mark Gruenwald contacted Joey Cavalieri at the offices of his long term employer, DC Comics and offered him the opportunity to move to Marvel and oversee the creation of a new chapter in the Marvel Universe his answer was a resounding yes. Cavalieri, a self effacing, long time comics fan admitted that charting the course of Marvel's future was something he couldn't resist. So without much ado, it was So Long DC, Hello Marvel.

The idea behind a line of Marvel comics set in the future was something that floated through the Marvel offices for some time. One aborted attempt saw John Byrne take his ideas for such a series away from Marvel and convert them into the "2112" graphic novel published by Dark Horse.

But most felt that this was too good an idea to go away, so DeFalco and Gruenwald recruited Cavalieri from DC, and along with Ralph Macchio they began laying the groundwork for the ultimate heir to the Marvel Universe. For Cavalieri it was "An idea in search of legitimacy", and a chance to "give a novel approach to characters that you know." Drawing from his extensive science fiction collection, Cavalieri laid the base from which the future would grow.

In early January of this year the writers and artists met with Cavalieri to discuss the look of the future. This planning session took place a full nine months before the first book would see print. Cavalieri held up a painting of of a dark and foreboding superstructure highway. This picture would set the tone for 2099. A set of rules where then issued. The future would not resemble those of the *Jetsons* or *Star Wars*, instead its closest inspiration would be that of *Blade Runner*.

That was the starting point, as things changed from the original vision, one thing remained constant, this was not a pristine future but a beat up version of the world today.

Unified Vision Once All

the creative teams were in place, Cavalieri set out to create a legitimate sense of continuity. Together with the series writers, he began to hash out a Bible for the future. It was first decided that in Marvel's world of Tomorrow, Corpora-

tions and not governments rule the lands and the lives of the people. As they continued concepts, the characters and their world took on a life of their own. Each book started to take shape and Cavalieri stole a idea from his former colleague, Mike Carlin's bag of tricks and instituted a policy of sharing books with the other creators. It was something that Carlin had done successfully with the *Superman* titles and Cavalieri hoped he could recreate that success (and achieve better continuity) with the 2099 series. A side effect from this sharing was the creation of a healthy sense of competition between the artists and a way to bring out the best in everyone.

A Kinder, Gentler Launch

when the first 2099 title hits the stands in September, it will be with none of the fanfare that accompanied the previously mentioned "New Universe" flop. Cavalieri stated "I am not comfortable with any sort of attention. I think good work speaks for itself." Without the usual hype that surrounds any new Marvel project, the 2099 series will relay on its audience discovering the books on the already crowded comic shelves. of course, this is not a sleuth project (your reading this article is proof of that) and the first issues of the four new series will feature one of the gimmicks currently showcased on today's "landmark" issues. Cavalieri admitted that each first issue will be foil stamped and color keyed to each of the character. As for Cavalieri's opinion of this gimmick, "I'm sorry we did that much. (These books) don't need it."

Spiderman 2099. The flagship title of this line is *Spiderman 2099*, written by David, and penciled and inked by Rick Leonardi and Al Williamson. Leonardi and Williamson only other work together was in the adjective-less Spiderman title number 17. Leonardi felt, "This might have got me the job on this book."

Spiderman 2099 was the only title previewed by Marvel before its release date. As each of the Spiderman books celebrated its lead character's 30th anniversary, a taste of the new series was given to the buying public. In *Web Of Spiderman*, a fold out poster featured the 2099 Spiderman with the current model. And in *The Amazing Spiderman 30th Anniversary Issue* the reader was given a 5page sneak preview of the new Webbed Wonder. Here a blue and red clad Spiderman,(in a costume closer to the black costume than his original blue and red) soared high above city passed floating cars while being chased be members of group entitled Alchemax. The chase runs the full 5 pages and the reader was then asked to wait until September to learn more about this new hero.

As for the Spiderman in the future, all he has in common with his predecessor is the name. The only acknowledgment to a prior Spiderman is the cameo inclusion of an old Spiderman comic in the first issue.

In 2099, Miguel O'Hara is a researcher for the Alchemax Corp. and lives life on the fast track. Governments in the future have been displaced by massive corporations. Inter-corp warfare and espionage have forced the corporations to the cutting edge of technology. O'Hara has been given the uncomfortable assignment of developing a secret espionage agent through genetic experimentation. When he discovers the corporation evil machinations for his research, he turns the experiment on himself. In a scene that bears a heavy resemblance to

Cronenberg's "The Fly", he splices his DNA with that of a spider's. The experiment leaves him human in appearance and destroys all his equipment in the process.

Power for power, its hard to tell the present and future Spiderman apart, both enjoy swinging from building to building, climbing walls and feature some sort of enhanced sensory perception. But as you step a little closer there are subtle differences. One glaring difference is the costume. Leonardi helped design a costume darker in flavor than the current's popular red and blue leotards. A frayed cape of web and a stylized death's head on his chest quickly separates the new from the old. One thing the new Spidey will have that his predecessor did (at least when Peter David was writing him) is a quick wit that seems to be the trademark of all of David's books.

Punisher 2099. While *Spiderman 2099* soars above the futuristic New York City, *Punisher 2099* takes us into its darkest alleys. Penciled by Tom Morgan and inked by Jimmy Palmiotti, *Punisher 2099* takes on a decidedly British tone with Pat Mills handling the writing chores. Crime and punishment will still be the prevalent theme but its administration is decidingly different. The current court system is replaced by the street corner judgment booths. Police drag the preps into the booth where a futuristic form of justice is served when those convicted pay the appropriate fine as it fits the crime. Of course this form of justice caters to the rich.

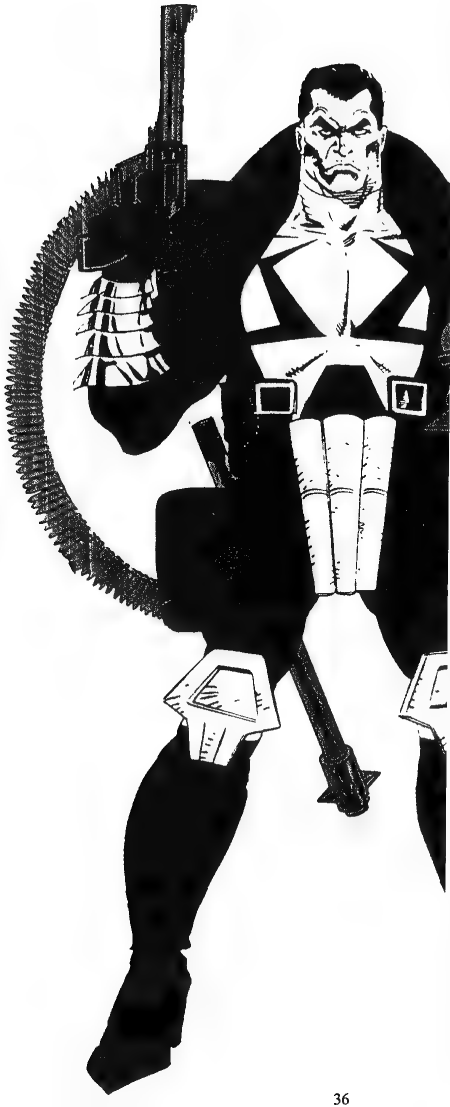
Jake Gallows, a member of the local police force despises the current justice system and decides that besides fines, there is a definite need for physical punishment. Gallows discovers Frank Castle's original War Journal and after reading the books final bloody entry (the reader's only clue to the fate of the original Punisher), he takes on the identity of the new Punisher.

Tom Morgan has stated, "This Punisher is more vicious than the original" (as if this was possible). He will cruise the city on a flying motorcycle and he will be armed with a power bat that can vary in consistency from rubber to titanium. But Morgan also promised, "(Gallows) has a sense of humor and he does have a good side. He saves kids and pulls cats out of trees, something that is not really seen in the current Punisher." Morgan credits Mills with giving the characters in the book so many layers.

One twist to this story has Gallows assigned to the police operations unit in charge of catching the Punisher. And there are two nice, recurring visuals that play up on the Punisher "Skull" trademark. The first has the new Punisher's costume skull emblem light up in a successful attempt to scare his opponents. The other enables Gallows to maintain identity in a world that sports all seeing video cameras on every corner. His costume can jam any camera so that his facial image is replaced by a skull's head.

Its seems that Mills and Co. will bring to the Marvel future a sense of judgment that very few preps will fear to "dredd".

Ravage 2099. Paul Ryan, the artist on *Ravage 2099* was also present for the creation of the



failed "New Universe". So when this assignment was first offered to him, he was, at the very least...gun shy. What convinced him to take on the penciling chores for Ravage was a chance to work with the book's writer and the driving force behind the original Marvel Universe, Stan Lee. Together with inker Keith Williams, they will chart the course for the only 2099 character without a retro history.

When Ryan was posed the question on how it felt to work with Lee, he let out a long audible sigh. After all here he was collaborating with a legend whose stories he grew up on. Once they began work on the book, it became a collaboration in every sense of the word. Ryan said that whenever he has a question for Lee, he left a message in his L.A. office and his call was returned at the first available time.

The star of *Ravage 2099* is Paul (Lee's little nod to penciller Ryan) Phillip Ravage, CEO of the Alchemax Corporation. Alchemax, you will find, is just one of the common threads that ties together to Futureverse. When Ravage discovers that evil forces permeate this corporation, he is driven from the company he built and is forced into hiding. Relying on his wits and whatever materials he can find, he wages a one man war against the evil in Alchemax. He becomes a sort of futuristic Macgyver, living a dirty, grimy life that is one step lower than that of the Punisher's.

In fact the similarities in appearance and style between Ravage and the Punisher are so striking that they caused Lee to rethink his original character. He plans to later give Ravage a power of sorts (possibly some type of mindblast) to give the character some distinction.

With all his credentials, Ravage is Lee's first regular series in

the world of dark and gritty heroes. As Ryan put it, "Would you want your daughter to date a hero named Ravage?" But in the new world of comics, Lee has caught on quickly to the current treads in storytelling and according to Ryan, "Changed his style to accommodate the poster book work at Marvel."

Doom 2099. When Cavalieri first sat down with Gruenwald and Macchio to decide on which

characters would comprise the 2099 Universe, they were in quick agreement on the first three books. But picking a fourth title became the toughest task of all. After tossing around the names of nearly every hero in the Marvel Universe, Ralph Macchio suggested the name of a villain, Dr. Doom. Cavalieri saw endless potential in the character and it was agreed that *Doom 2099* would be the fourth and final title to launch the future of Marvel Comics.

Unlike the other books that bear the name of a current Marvel character, this is not just a new creation with a familiar name but in fact may be the original Dr. Doom from the 20th Century.

While other writers toyed with the idea of a new Dr. Doom, John Francis Moore submitted a rather unique proposal. He created a Dr. Doom with all the memories of the original yet trapped in the body of a different man. When "Victor Von Doom" woke in the year 2099, his dreams were haunted by past defeats at the hands of the Fantastic Four. Upon learning that his old foes no longer existed, he set out to rebuild the empire that was once rightfully his. But Moore stressed that the reader will not know whether this is the original Doom or not. Cavalieri liked the twist Moore gave the story and decided to give him the assignment. Moore was then joined by the penciller/inker team of Pat Broderick and John Beatty.

"This comic will stand on its own and not infringe on anyone else's conception of Dr. Doom." Moore stated. "And while this has the most to do with Marvel history, tying the past and future, this doesn't affect continuity at all." This comment was in reference to the fact that in *Doom 2099*, Doom will have flashbacks and remember that he outlived his "friends and allies."

As for the question if this was the real Dr. Doom or not, Moore noted that there are so many Doombots making the rounds nowadays, its hard to tell which is the real Dr. Doom anyway.

In 2099, Dr. Doom is out to convince the world he is the original as well as regain control of Latveria. Always behind the times, the futuristic Latveria looks like a city from the 1980's. Currently, the country is under the exploitive control of a corporate raider named Tiger Wild. Wild originally worked for Alchemax (there goes that name again) but broke from the corporation when he seized Latveria. It seems that the country's economy had been shaky since the disappearance of the "original" Dr. Doom and they were ripe for takeover. Now it is up to Doom and a band of gypsies he allied himself with, to take back Latveria and return it to its former glory.

This band of gypsies, led by Fortune, will also provide Doom with new armor when he realizes the old one is obsolete. The new armor will consist of Nanotechnology, connecting Doom's neurosystem to it and will be forged from a mixture of admantium and Lanxide. In future issues, Doom will use his armor to explore cyberspace in an attempt to gain an advantage against all others.

In *Doom 2099*, Moore, "Took (Doom) a step back to rebuild him into a world class power" because he vision of Doom is as a "Benign Dracula, doing what he thinks is best for himself and the world."

The Wrap. . .

Marvel will stagger the introduction of these books over the course of four months by releasing one new title a month starting in September. As for the inevitable crossovers, Cavalieri has promised to refrain for the first few months in order to give these books a chance to stand on their own. He has also promised to stay away from giving definite histories to the current Marvel characters thereby avoiding the traps DC fell into with the *Legion of Super Heroes* and the Adult Legion story.

One last note, in speaking with each of the creators assigned to this project, I felt a genuine sense of enthusiasm by all those involved. If this enthusiasm can be transferred to the finished project, perhaps the 2099 series will be around long enough to see its own future.

Pitt by Dale Keown

Into The Pitt

Hank Kanalz interviews Dale Keown

The latest addition to the hot Image line of mini-series is Dale Keown's Pitt. *Fresh off Marvel's* Hulk, *Keown hasn't wasted any time in getting started on this new creation. We had a chance to catch up with Dale and* Pitt *co-writer Brian Hotton while they were busy completing a nine page preview scheduled to appear in* Youngblood *#4.*

HANK KANALZ: You started in the independent market, didn't you? What made you decide to return to the independent market, and Image in particular?

DALE KEOWN: I dunno! [laughter] Actually, I think I returned because that *is* where I started. I experienced that creative freedom of making your own choices and that kind of stuff. Starting by working on your own for an independent company is actually a good way to get started in the industry because you get to draw and apply your talent and get paid at the same time. It's sort of like getting paid for going to school—you get paid to learn! And the freedom—it's a good feeling when you're making your own choices.

HK: So why did you move on to Marvel?

DK: Well, I kinda got tired of it—actually, the money wasn't really there, and I was still kind of working for somebody else, rather than myself. Now, with Image, I really am working for myself. When I went to Marvel, it was a whole different set of rules! You get used to that, and it's ok, and the money's better. Then you reach a certain point—it's when you put a lot of work into your book that it starts to sell because of the artwork and not necessarily the character—that you feel you should be recognized for the amount of work you do. And that's what happened, I think, with Todd, and Rob, and the others.

HK: And do you think that's what happened with you on Hulk?

DK: Well—if you do the math, yeah. As far as sales, the book was doing between 60,000 and 100,000 a month when Jeff Purves was doing it. I did it for two and half years and the book is up to about 300,000 a month. Why is that? I'm not patting myself on the back or bragging, but I think I might have had something to do with that.

HK: So are you going to continue on Hulk?

DK: No. My last issue is #398.

HK: I've heard rumors that you've been taken off of #400.

DK: Yeah, that's true. I guess Marvel's attitude is to start whoever's taking over the book with what I would've done for #400. I don't even know who that'll be, but I guess they'll put a guest artist on #399 and just start the new artist with #400.

HK: And how was Peter David?

DK: I like Peter. I don't have a problem with Peter. He just takes all this too seriously and personally. But when I was working with him, he was a good guy.

HK: Now that you're working on this new book on your own, do you find you have a change in your disciplines, without having an editor to keep you on track?

DK: The thing I have working for me at this point is the excitement—the novelty of this! I'm so excited about doing this that I want to work! And that's the main thing—when you really like what you're doing, and you're making all the decisions—you *love* to work! And I like to draw anyway; I like to apply my craft—so this excitement on top of my liking to draw—well, you can't go wrong!

I'll reach a point when I want to take some time off, but not for a while.

HK: How do you balance drawing full time with your other interests, like music?

DK: Balance...hmmm...well, I just draw until I don't feel like drawing anymore. I have a recording studio in my house, so I just go there.

HK: And play until you don't feel like playing anymore.

DK: Right! You sort of trade off. If you do something for too

long, you'll get sick of that, then you go and find something else to do until you're sick of *that*.

HK: Did you come up with Pitt specifically for Image, or did you have this character for a long time?
DK: Well, I could show you sketches of characters I drew while I was "on the road," and they all have certain characteristics that I like to draw—he has no nose, or at least, no *visible* nose! And he has the claws and the huge body. It's the kind of stuff I like to draw. I know a lot of artists who do!

But he's a character that's been bouncing about in my head for awhile.

HK: Where'd the name come from?
DK: The manager of the last band I played with was a member of a bike gang in Canada. Sort of a Canadian version of Hell's Angels. And his nickname was "Pitt." And I though "WOW! What a cool name!" And I 've always told people that I thought it would be neat to have a character named Pitt!

HK: And then Todd McFarlane called you up and said, "Hey, Bud! Do you want to do a pin-up for my book?" And you did the piece that ran in Spawn *#1, the dark and moody creature with the cute kid on the shoulders.*
DK: Yup! I thought Pitt looked so mean—so EVIL—that I thought it was good just to put the kid on top of him.

HK: Tell us a little about the character.
DK: Okay. This character is an alien creature—sort of a hybrid of another alien. I guess you could compare them to the Klingons, only they're worse. They take over planets and rape them of all the planet's resources. That's what they do for a living! And Pitt is a member of this hybrid group of aliens--sort of super soldiers—who are sent on reconnaissance missions and actually take over the governments that protect the planets they attack.

Actually, there's this crippled alien boy who's an advanced psychic. He's sort of an apprentice to a man called The Seer, a psychically advanced man with almost magic powers. I can make this shorter for you—the consciousness of this little boy gets transferred into this giant creature, and the whole package is known as Pitt. This boy's consciousness is trapped it can't get out of this creatur body. And the creature is now viewed as a traitor because it longer is an evil guy—the creature has the consciousnes of this good boy

HK: Is that what brings him to earth?
DK: Yeah. He has to fight his own kind, but finds he has to escape. The Seer helps him by sending Pitt to earth. Actually, The Seer doesn't know he's sending Pitt to earth, but that where Pitt ends up.

So Pitt ends up be-

An interview with Dale Keown

friending a little boy on earth [the one you saw in *Spawn #1*]. Instead of being a creature befriending a kid, it's actually two kids kind of playing together. Pitt is more advanced, so he can pick up on the language quickly, but he's still a young alien! And the story goes from there.

HK: You're writing this with long-time friend Brian Hotton. How does that work?
DK: Well, we work out of my studio in my house. It's a really neat situation. My studio is in my attic, and they've totally gutted my house. The ceiling's torn out, so I can look down into my living room! And Brian's working down there, so we shout back and forth!

Back when I was working at Aircel, I enjoyed working on my own, but I always wondered if I was making sense. I don't know, am I making sense now?

BRIAN HOTTON: No.

HK: So Brian brings in a fresh perspective and a voice of reason?
DK: Exactly!

HK: So do you co-plot and noodle out your ideas first, then you draw the pages?
DK: Yeah. We work on that. Then we look at the pencilled pages together and say, "I think he should say that," and Brian'll say, "No, I think he should say that," and then we'll reach some sort of compromise and we have something we both like.

HK: Brian, how'd you meet up with Dale?
BH: I met Dale in 1985. I auditioned for a band that Dale was already in. Everyone in the band turned out to be a bunch of flake-olas, except for Dale, who was always in his room drawing pictures. We ended up always being roommates because it wasn't in the budget to give us each a separate room, so we got to know each other that way. And I was always enthralled with Dale's artwork. I would diddle around with short stories now and then, and we went from there.

HK: Do you think you guys think along the same lines?
BH: Yeah, well Dale plays bass and guitar and programs drum machines and produces music—and I play guitar and write songs. Between the two of us we write some good music.
DK: And we create something that wasn't there to begin with.

HK: And that carries over to your comic book! When does that debut?
DK: The first of four issues comes out in November. We're going to test the waters with the mini-series. We'll see how that goes.

BH: And there's a nine-page preview in *Youngblood #4* sometime in September.
DK: We're finishing that up as we speak!

HK: In the mini-series, you'll introduce Pitt and explain a little about him, then?
DK: We're still working everything out for that, but yes. The *Youngblood* story is actually the story of how he gets to earth, but it isn't revealed that he's a kid. He's this evil looking type, but he saves a life in the story. So that makes you think, "Hmmm, this could be a good guy!"

HK: Many of the Image creators are excited about the "playground" concept. Are you planning on using some other Image characters in your book?
DK: I hope so! Jim Lee has expressed an interest in some sort of cross-over. We're looking forward to that. The possibilities are endless.

We're keeping the monster as leading man alive. Erik has the Dragon, Todd has Spawn. When *Pitt* comes out, that'll make four single-character books from Image.

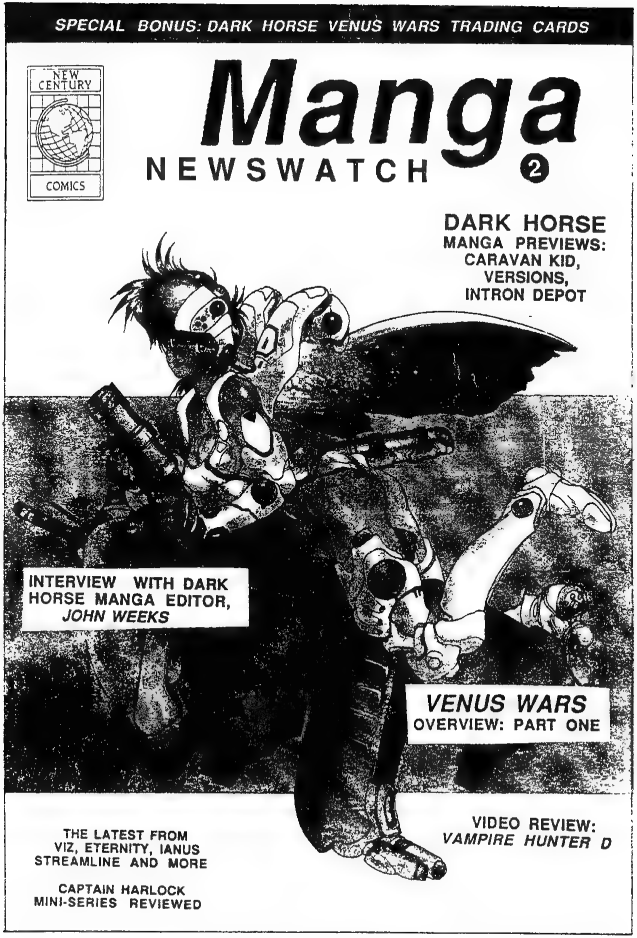
HK: With Image getting bigger everyday, do you see yourself doing other kinds of projects with Image?
DK: What do you mean "getting"? It's already HUGE!

Actually, it's really hard to say at this time. I might be in the middle of the *Pitt* mini-series and say to myself, "Y'know, this would be really COOL to spin off and do as a different book!" I think there are other characters in *Pitt* that could make for interesting stories. When we come back after the mini-series, we may explore those possibilities.

HK: What do you think of the other Image creators?
BH: Well, I had never met these guys until Chicago. I had read stuff, and heard stuff, but never met them. When I actually got in a small room with these guys and got a chance to absorb the incredible amount of positive energy that just comes wafting off these guys, I was really blown away. I'm really glad to be a part of this whole thing.
DK: Me too. I had never met Marc Silvestri or Erik Larsen, or the other guys except for Todd. I really left there feeling good.
BH: It was incredible. It was almost spiritual!

Pitt #1 ships from Image Comics in November. ●

Hank Kanalz last interviewed Whilce Portacio for the October *Malibu Sun* (#18).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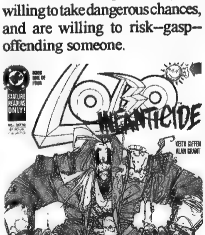
COMICS NOW

by Jerry Smith

DC Comics might not have near Marvel's share of the market, but they more than make up for it by having better comics. Their books also prove they are willing to take dangerous chances, and are willing to risk--gasp--offending someone.



A case in point is the current series of Lobo titles; **Lobo's Back, Lobo: Blazing Chain of Love,** and **Lobo: Infanticide**. Last years's **Lobo Christmas Special** was enough to let readers know DC wasn't fooling around, they really didn't give a Ho,Ho,Ho if their readers were the traditional Christmas type. They got Lobo whether they wanted him or not. Most people wouldn't want him.

Lobo is much more than DC's Wolverine, as he has been called (but not to his face). He's the most bad mannered, bad mouthed, uncouth S.O.B. I've ever seen in a mainstream comic book. No action is too rauchy, no courtesy left unmangled by the main man. This guy would give Judith Martin the ulcer of her life.

Lobo works as a bounty hunter for easygoing hairdresser Ramona, taking all the rough jobs. Like in **Blazing Chain of Love**, where he is hired to bring in a hooker currently working in a harem on the planet Boinx-11. From the artwork though, the planet could easily have been called Phallic Symbol 69.

Lobo's visit to sleezeworld hasn't softened him up at all. In his search for the magic harlot, he has time to behead one guard and blow away another while wisecracking about their being eunuchs, and put an entire planet full of harem girls to sleep with knock-out darts. Lobo using knock-out darts? Maybe he is softening up. Hey, uh, don't tell him I said that, OK?

The trailblazers responsible for this smut are Lobo creator Keith Giffen and ace dialoger Alan Grant. Always amusing, Grant is at his height here, pushing the envelope of what DC will publish. Although most of the humor is featured in double entendres only a small child wouldn't get, I'd love to see what the censors wouldn't allow. Lobo functions as Giffen and Grant's Id, doing and saying anything he wants to, anytime he wants to.

With every Lobo series that hits the market, I find myself thinking that they've reached the edge, they couldn't get any more outrageous than this. With each successive book, I'm proved wrong again. Everytime I come to that now traditional last page (where Lobo dispenses homespun advice, usually accompanied by an obscene gesture), I find myself stealing a few chuckles from the feeling of guilty pleasure I get from these books. It's so nice to read something that takes a few chances and exists only to offend grandmothers and Reverend Donald Wildmon. I can't wait to see how Giffen and Grant top **Blazing Chain**.

The Lobo titles, like a lot of the books I seem to be enjoying these days, are politically incorrect smut. Make that highly recommended politically incorrect smut.

I hate to keep picking on writer Gerard Jones, but his writing keeps going further and further off the deep end. Consider his run on the new, refurbished **Justice League Europe**. It's really weird. Jones has done dialog on the book for years, but when Keith Giffen bailed out of the League books, he took over the plotting as well. Giffen's plots were a lot more fun; Jones takes the book much too seriously. He takes **Justice League Europe** more seriously than Dan Jurgens takes **Justice League America**, which takes some doing.

Take, for example, **Justice League Europe #42**, "Mother of Monsters". The League is trapped in some kind of Underworld dimension, and all the characters wind up acting like idiots. Seems like the Underworld mistress Echidna doesn't like superheroes invading her realm, so she tempts all of the men of the group into coming after her. She captures them one at a time and ends up turning them all into barnyard animals (while still in their cos-

tumes). Then Power Girl, as super people are wont to do, has a pseudo-philisophical discussion with Echidna before slugging it out with her snake inspired form. Weird.

All the heroes end up on the surface, safe and sound, because, as Power Girl explains, she cut a deal with Echidna. Of course, she couldn't have done that before they slugged it out for four pages. The deal is, PG will return to the Underworld once a year to be Echindna's student and try to "change the way we think", whatever that means.

Jones' writing per se isn't the problem with JLE, it's the general themes of his work. He gets kudos for trying to do something different, but it just isn't working. This story is about the power of women and their inner strength, but Jones makes the male heroes come off as ignorant bumpkins in the bargain. This is no surprise, he does the same thing in **Mosaic**, the Green Lantern title he writes. His Hal Jordan Green Lantern comes off as weak and inefficient in **JLE**, just like his John Stewart does in **Mosaic**. And like in **Mosaic**, the only strong characters in JLE are women.

Jones did the same kind of incomprehensible storytelling in his last JLE storyline, about Deconstructo, a anarchist who gains magical powers. Deconstructo spends a few issues rearranging artworks and spouting boring gems about his philosophy of art. Huh? Is a superhero comic really the place for a fine art dissertation?

These stories are boring and trod along a snail's pace. Jones' characters are not likable, so the reader feels no sense of caring for what happens to them. As I said, I appreciate the fact that Jones is doing something different with his comics. This comic has lost something since Giffen left, but it isn't filled by Deconstructo or Echinda, or a bunch of dead end characters.

One of the new Image titles, **WildC.A.T.S: Covert Action Teams**, wasn't out when I covered the Image titles last issue, so I'll deal with it now. **WildC.A.T.S** is by artist/writer Jim Lee and writer/co-creater Brandon Choi.

Let me get this out of the way first-off: the artwork in this book is phenomenal. No one draws superhero comics like Jim Lee. His characters are all well designed and strong, and his sense of panel layout and storytelling ability grow with every consecutive issue he draws. You might sense a big "but" coming, but there really isn't one.

The plot of **WildC.A.T.S** deals with Jacob Marlowe, a supposed EMP Lord, a champion of mankind, and his team strike force, a group of costumed do-gooders who could fit into the X-Men a little too easily. The first issue has the WildC.A.T.S battling the Daemonites, the resident bad guy squad, over Voodoo, a dancer they both want to join their consecutive groups. WildC.A.T.S win.

One good thing about WildC.A.T.S is the book avoids a major problem I have with most of the Image group books: all the characters look the same. For the most part, all of the groups in Image comics consist of a bunch of well muscled men and women, one of whom is carring a huge gun, one wearing criss-crossing ammo belts, and all the rest wearing different types of armor and carring smaller firearms, mostly futuristic-looking pistols. **Cyberforce, Brigade, Wetworks**, the armored **Shadowhawk**, all of these books' covers have a sameness to them. **WildC.A.T.S** characters at least have interesting costumes.

Another foible of the Image universe I hope **WildC.A.T.S** avoids is the marketing ploy of being released in a series of miniseries instead of an ongoing title. **WildC.A.T.S #1** says 1 of 3. What happens when issue #3 hits the stands? Do we start over with **WildC.A.T.S #1, Volume II**? Then #1, Volume III, and so on? If so, it's just a cheap marketing ploy to hit the market with as many #1 issues as possible. People have constantly asked how Image can last after the hoopla dies down. This could be one of those ways. Constant #1 issues keep the investor's market buying. But it doesn't make good comics.

You know a concept is getting old when even a great premise can't save the bad writing. Such is the case with **Punisher and Captain America: Blood and Glory**. You would think this team-up concept is sure fire--I can't think of two more opposing characters in the Marvel universe. The Punisher, who shoots bad guys seventy times in the heart and then asks questions, and Captain

America, the epitome of the good, kind, superhero who exists only to establish domestic tranquility and help old ladies across the street. What happened? After seeing this first issue, I'm not sure. Could it be the sloppy art by Klaus Janson, who's pencils have become way too loose?

It could be the rather lackluster story. Actually, the Cap and Punisher introductions are done well. Cap stops an illegal weapons shipment in his chapter and the Punisher blows away some drug dealers in his. The silly part is the end of the story, where a female government double agent tricks the Punisher into blowing Captain America away with a high-powered rifle. Right. It's not exactly clear what Punisher thinks Cap is guilty of--gun running, dealing drugs or something else, but, knowing Cap's reputation, don't you think he would have at least given him a call first? This is Captain America, for Pete's sake! Hero of four generations, leader of the Avengers, etc. Instead of giving him the benefit of the doubt and letting him tell his side of the story, Punisher believes a woman he just met and fires a rifle at a decorated, respected national hero. The Punisher might be crazy, but he's not stupid. This overpriced ($5.95US) prestige format would be better off as an issue of What If..., as in **What If a Captain America/ Punisher Team-Up was Published and the Story was Really Dumb?**

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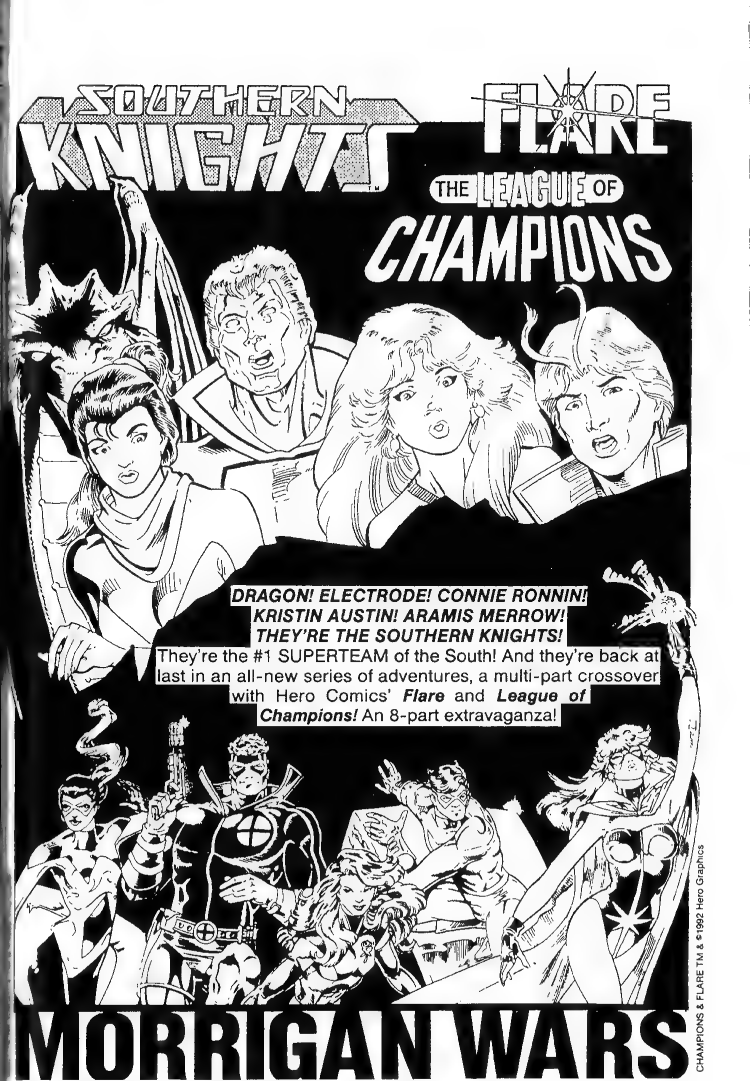
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INDUSTRY NEWS

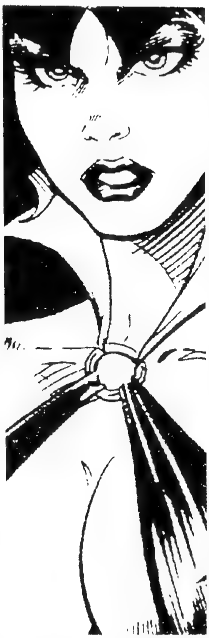
Harris Publications Takes Comics Venture In House

Harris Publications goes solo this month, publishing and marketing its own comics for the first time, and ending a one year relationship with Dark Horse Comics, who had provided distribution and marketing support.

Associate Publisher and Editorial Director Meloney Crawford Chadwick explained how the transition would be completed. "Dark Horse will distribute **Vampirella SummerNights**, and the last issue of the **Creepy** limited series, which have already been solicited. Harris will not release any titles in October to accommodate the switch, but we are currently soliciting our books for November, which will be lower-priced, saddle stitched 32-page deluxe format comics in full color."

The first two titles under the Harris Comics name can be found in this month's Previews: **Vampirella #1**, an all new monthly comic written by Kurt Busiek and drawn by new talent Louis Small, Jr., with covers by Adam Hughes; and Twister, a thriller with a serial killer theme, written by Jim Hudnall and drawn by Bill Koeb, with covers by Brent Anderson. Dark Horse inadvertently listed these titles last month, meaning they are resolicitations under the new line.

Publisher Stanley Harris commenting on the growth of Harris comics division said, "We value the support we received from Mike Richardson and his staff during our association with Dark Horse, but Harris Comics is growing, and we felt the time was right to go out on our own. We have exciting things planned, including a change in format and a move to full color comics, and we look forward to continuing support from the Direct Market."



Harris will continue to add titles on a monthly basis, with a full schedule already planned through 1993.

MALIBU COMICS ENTERTAINMENT, INC.

Red Hot Comic Book Publisher Merges With Video Game Company

Los Angeles, August 18- Malibu Graphics Publishing Group, one of the largest and fastest-growing comic book publishers in North America, has merged with prominent video game creator and developer Acme Interactive to form Malibu Comics Entertainment, Inc., it was announced today by Scott Rosenberg, president of Malibu Graphics and Bob Jacob, president of Acme.

The new association marks the first such union between a comic book publisher and video game developer, and ensures Malibu Comics Entertainment not only heightened impact within both respective industries, but a leadership position in the burgeoning realm of comic-book based video game production, licensing, and distribution.

Along these lines, Malibu Comics Entertainment has already finalized unique arrangements with Sega of America, Inc., and Sage's Creation, a Sega publisher, calling for the creation of two Sega-Genesis video games based directly on Malibu Comics' popular comic book series, **Ex-Mutants** and **Dinosaurs For Hire**.

Under the new corporate structure, Rosenberg and Jacob will serve as cochairmen and co-chief executives of the privately-held Malibu Comics Entertainment, Inc. In addition, the new com-

pany is comprised of two distinct subsidiary divisions: Malibu Comics, with Rosenberg serving as president; and Malibu Interactive, with Jacob as president. Products developed and/or produced by Malibu Comics and Malibu Interactive are expected to exceed $100 million in combined retail sales this year, and both Rosenberg and Jacob plan to steadily expand on the scope of their multi-media activities shortly.

Formed in 1987, Malibu Graphics Publishing Group has garnered national attention for granting unusual creative freedom and creator-ownership opportunities to writers and artists. Enjoying its greatest period of growth and success to date, the company publishes comics spanning such diverse stylistic realms as super-heroes, science fiction, humor, adventure, action and fantasy. When seven of Marvel Comics' top artists formed their own company earlier this year, they selected Malibu as their publisher. The two debut comic titles to result from this recent arrangement both became immediate best-sellers and set sales records nationwide.

Acme Interactive, which includes among its video game projects **Batman Returns, Joe Montana Football, David Robinson's Supreme Court** and **Evander Holyfield Boxing** has enjoyed a 400% growth since its founding by Jacob only a year and a half ago, and has garnered a worldwide reputation for its conceptual and technical ingenuity. In its new incarnation as Malibu Interactive, the company will continue pioneering new video game technologies, including the much-anticipated Sega CD format, as well as conceiving and developing games for Sega, Nintendo and other international manufacturers and publishers, while also being ideally situated to develop original interactive games derived from the full range of Malibu Comics' properties.

As a result of this new merger, Malibu Comics Entertainment will be in a unique position to approach video game manufacturers and publishers as a joint licensor and developer able to span the full creative and technological gamut.

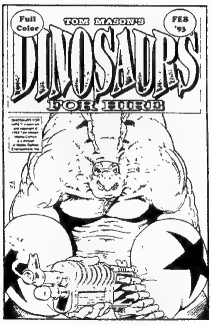
Commented Rosenberg and Jacob jointly, "By combining forces, we are now able to present a cost-effective unified front to the industry and to take the lead in the growing trend toward comic book inspired interactive video games. Under the Malibu Comics Entertainment banner, we are confident of being able to offer not only a wealth of stylistically varied original and licensed properties, but also-and perhaps most importantly--a single artistic and technological vision for our products as well.

Representing the first example of Malibu Comics Interactive video game arena, the new company's arrangement with Sega licensee Sage's Creation calls for the introduction of **Ex-Mutants** into the marketplace by November of this year. Sega of America will follow with the video game version of **Dinosaurs For Hire** in February of next year. Both **ExMutants** and **Dinosaurs For Hire** are original Malibu Comics titles which enjoy international popularity.

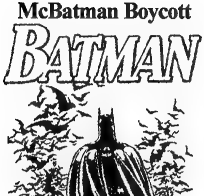
Upon their release, the new MalibuSega games will represent the only available comic-book inspired video games not based on Marvel, DC or Disney characters, with the exception of **Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles**. Beyond marking one of the first such marriages between the comic book and video game industries, the new licensing deals are noteworthy since Malibu Comics Entertainment and Sega will be working very closely together to co-promote both the comic and game titles.

Ex-Mutants, launched in 1986, concerns the adventures of six products of genetic engineering who are changed from mutants into humans and wind up living among mutants as they try to fight for humanity. The forthcoming video game version will be launched with particular fanfare since its release will coincide with the introduction of an entirely new team of **Ex-Mutants** in the comic book series itself. Malibu will be shipping the first issue of the new **Ex-Mutants** title on November 3.

Dinosaurs For Hire, created in 1987 by Malibu Comics' Creative Director Tom Mason, revolves around the adventures of three television-influenced, pistol packing dinosaur detectives who work for a federal government agency to combat assorted underworld hoodlums, vampires, out-of-work actors, politicians and drug kingpins. The unique comic book series is widely admired for its witty humor and tongue-in-cheek approach. The monthly series will be returning in full color in February as part of a co-promotion with the Sega Genesis game.



McBatman Boycott



Parents across the country have shown quite a bit of concern over McDonald's tie-in with the PG-13 rated **Batman Returns**. The apparent furor centers on the massive McDonald's Happy Meal advertising campaign which Is directed at kids, and ignores the fact that the the blockbuster movie is a powerful film made for adults.

As kids rush to McDonald's for **Batman Returns** toys, they're also prodding parents to take them to the movie. And some parents who do not heed the PG-13 warning, are surprised to find themselves with terrified and crying children because of the film's darker side. NBC reporter Faith Daniels, who devoted one of her shows to "Parents against Batman Returns" and refused to take her five-year old child to the film told Entertainment Weekly, "It's fine to make Batman Returns an adult film, but don't market It to kids. It's rated PG-13 but who's buying the action toys? Not 13-yearolds."

McDonald's, stung by the latest round of criticism, has tried to downplay the connection between the film and its Happy Meal toys. McDonald's spokeswoman Rebecca Caruso said, "The objective of the [Happy Meal] program was to allow young people to experience the fun of the Batman character. It was not designed to promote attendance at the movie. It was certainly not our intent to confuse parents or disappoint children."

ETERNITY SMITH ON TELEVISION

A $56,000 agreement, to bring Heroic Publishing's classic science fiction series, **Eternity Smith**, to the small screen has been signed by New World Television and Smith _ Hoberg and Dennis Mallonee. Production of the pilot and any subsequent series will be handled by Goodman-Rosen Productions, the company which produced the new **Zorro** series for the Family Channel, and whose new series based on the Highlander movies will debut in September.

This project is particularly attractive to Hollywood, because **Eternity Smith** was a series that not only dealt with many of the same themes as the popular Terminator movies, but did it before those movies were released. Indeed, the basic plotline of **Eternity Smith** thoroughly anticipated the basic plotline of **Terminator 2**, involving as it did a man who had been sent back into the past on a mission to prevent a nightmare world of the future from ever coming into being.

Goodman-Rosen is currently in the process of assembling a writing team to handle series development. Noted science fiction writer (and long-time **Eternity Smith** fan) Harlan Ellison has already indicated a strong interest in writing at least two episodes.

Unlike many adaptations of comic book characters to live-action media, there's a strong possibility that the television version of **Eternity Smith** will remain faithful to the original. Smith co-creator Dennis Mallonee has been signed on to act as the associate producer for the pilot, and to continue in some production capacity when filming for the series gets underway. Mallonee has remained in close contact with Goodman-Rosen from the beginning of negotiations, and has expressed his intent to remain closely connected with the project through all states of development.

And with **Eternity Smith** on the verge of making it to television, the return of the Eternity Smith comic book is probably not far behind.

The Death of Superman: DC Plans Lively PR Effort

When Superman gives up his life fighting to save Metropolis from Doomsday in the pages of **Superman #75**, it's a good bet his untimely death will make headlines not only at the fictional Daily Panet, but in the real world, too.

In fact, if all goes according to the plans of DC's Marketing Department, Superman's death could easily gain as much media attention as Clark and Lois' engagement or the new Robin. That could mean storied and sound bites at **Entertainment Tonight, USA Today, HBO**, the **Associated Press** newswire, and more!

Needless to say, if the anticipated publicity develops, comic shops could see a flood of new customers and big demand for **Superman #75**, the entire Doomsday storyline, and **Superman** titles in general.

PREVIEW

ZOOT #1

By Los Bros. Langridge

published by Fantagraphics Books

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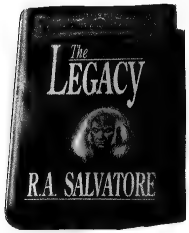
Gaming News

The Book Of The Year!

Without a doubt, one of the most awaited projects by TSR, the nation's top fantasy publisher is their new, first-ever hardcover novel, *The Legacy*. It has all the ingredients of another best seller...a fantastic author, a captivating fantasy story, and a huge book promotion! R.A. Salvatore is TSR's hottest author, having sold over 1.5 million copies and is rated as a *New York Times* best seller. So far, more than 5 million Forgotten Realms novels have been sold worldwide and this one is no exception to the rule!

Life is good for Drizzt Do'Urden...until the dark elf uncovers a powerful enemy's vindictive plot to destroy his life. *The Legacy* is a fast paced fantasy thriller packed with magic, drama, and suspense, and it sets the stage for Salvatore's newest fantasy trilogy. If you're a fan of Drizzt, Bruenor or Wulfgar, this is the continuance where the Icewind Dale trilogy left off. For a firsthand sample of *The Legacy* you can read a preview chapter in one of Salvatore and TSR's current novels, *Night Masks*. *Night Masks* is the third book in a five-book series entitled the Cleric Quintet. Place your order for *The Legacy* today! It goes on sale in October.



DARKURTHE LEGENDS

DarkUrthe Legends Fantasy Role-Playing/Interactive Campaigning Game is designed to be more of a storytelling game; "... it puts the creativity back into the hands of the DM and players ... some thing that is long overdue," as one playtester put it. DMs and players alike can create spells, skills, magic items and tailor-made characters--DMs are given guidelines to follow using their own sense of storytelling, rather than using stringent "encounter tables," to create richer more enjoyable adventures.

DarkUrthe Legends has already been introduced to gamers in the United States, England, France, Canada and the Netherlands and has been meet with enthusiasm.

DarkUrthe Legends is set in the land of DarkUrthe and although it can be played like a fantasy role-playing game, the results of each gaming group's adventures can be farther reaching.

In conjunction with the **DarkUrthe Legends monthly**, the fantasy role-playing game becomes an Interactive Campaigning game. Gamers can send us their ideas for monsters, magic and more, and we will plug their ideas right into the pages of the **DarkUrthe Legends monthly** (the comic book, the short stories and the articles)--Imagine: they could see their own player character appear in the pages of the comic book!

We want to give the readers of **DarkUrthe Legends monthly** the opportunity to see their ideas published.

The rule book consists of 200+ pages (B&W) with a full-color, professionally painted cover, retailing for only US $19.95.

Gaming News

The Fun Never Ends with the New DRAGON QUEST Game... and Every Adventure is Different!

Dragon Quest™

Introducing DRAGON QUEST, an exciting new adventure game from TSR, Inc. Just in time for the Holidays, it's great for every teen on your gift list!

It's exciting adventure with the DRAGON QUEST game! Players create heroic warriors and go on exciting quests in a treacherous adventure world. The action builds as players uncover traps, escape monsters, and battle dragons If they work together, they,'ll discover treasure and return as heroes!

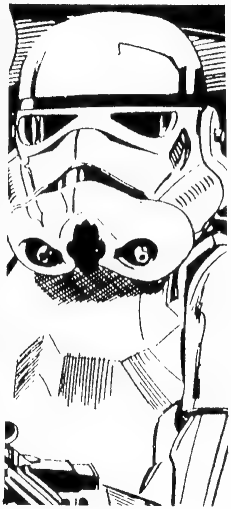
The DRAGON QUEST game is packed with hero and monster cards, adventure books, dice, and a huge gameboard... and the specially marked boxes also contain 6 free metal heroes – and a free DRAGON QUEST T-shirt offer!

The fun never ends with the DRAGON QUEST game. Every adventure is different and the game can be played over and over for hours of monster-bashing fun. The DRAGON QUEST game can be found at Toys R Us, Waldenbooks, B. Dalton bookstores, and toy and hobby stores everywhere. It's for 2 to 6 players, ages 10 and up. The suggested retail price $22.95

Cross PromotionPotential: Vampire Movie, Vampire Game

Columbia Pictures' Bram Stoker's **Dracula** is nearing its box office premiere, and White Wolf's timing couldn't be better for an updated version of their popular **Dracula** role-playing game. With a host of all-new vampiric archetypes, brand-new rework, updated rules, and expanded background information, this completely overhauled version of the best-selling **Vampire Sourcebook** allows players to experience life (or death) as a monstrous, sans-sanguine blood-sucker!

West End Games Updates Star Wars RPG, Adds Miniatures



Gamers can join the Rebel Alliance, become a smuggler, or learn the ways of the Jedi with more drama (and melodrama), excitement, and cliff-hanging heroics than ever before, as one West End's most popular space-fantasy games returns via an all-new, completely revised (and expanded) second edition! Easy to use, fun to read, and completely compatible with the original game, **Star Wars 2nd Edition** now offers players a selection of simplified systems for movement and space combat and complete rules for all facets of the **Star Wars** gaming system (including rules and information for events that transpired after the Battle of Endor).

West End is also offering new blister packs of **Star Wars Miniatures** to round out game-playing fare.

The Gaming Fool's Review

The Gaming Fool's Review

by Tony Parsons

Greetings, Gamers and Allies to the Gaming World! Allow me to present myself, I am the All-Powerful, Unfathomable, Eerily Omnipotent and Brand-Spanking New Gaming Fool, Tony Parsons. I know precisely what you're thinking, "Where is our friend, the mighty Joe Martin, he who formerly bore the pretense of the Gaming Fool?". Well, in two words, he's gone. , Yes, I shall expand...it appears that he had an ill-fated altercation with a fiesty and drooling Goblin named Mogglob. This denizen of the unnatural, as pathetic as he was, seemed to possess a swift and biting two-handed sword (can you imagine the sight? Hmmm). Alas, he has departed us and thus, here I am. What a way to get a job! Alright let's get this show on the road. I feel that the deceased's format for these reviews shall not be wasted. It is my solemn duty and tribute to the late Joe Martin.

Have you ever stopped and looked at all the games and companies that create them? There is a *plethora* out there: fantasy games (a plethora in itself), gothic games, futuristic games, crazy cartoon games, horror games, war games, generic games, superhero games, and more. Aye, 'tis a plethora of awesome and mighty games that make the earth tremble and the pillars of heavens shake! It can also confuse the heck out of a gamer who is contemplating "what to play?". I, the ultimate force of Gaming knowledge, shall apply myself to your aid by rating a few of the companies that create these role-playing delights. "WHAT?!" Oh, yes! I, the Gaming Fool, shall indeed rate and describe the backbones of the gaming world. Only one of my might and charismatic aura can undertake such a mighty task! Indeed, my groovy gamateers, I will put into a brief paragraph my thoughts about such powers of my choosing which shall include TSR, Wizards of the Coast, White Wolf, FASA, Palladium Books, and ICE. Let the adventure begin!

TSR. Ah, three of the mightiest letters in the gaming world! Easily recognized as the creme de la creme of creative force in gaming and the supreme commanders of the gaming armada. Who can honestly say, "I've never heard of Dungeons and Dragons"? D&D is the most known and played game in the world, hands down with its own vast array of worlds: *Dragonlance, Forgotten Realms, Ravenloft, Dark Sun, Spelljammers* and *Greyhawk.* TSR doesn't stop with just this! They have cre-

ated numerous other games such as *Star Frontiers, Boot Hill, Gamma World*, and they produce *Marvel Super Heroes* through licensing. So many roleplaying games that my head spins (Ouch!) and the sun shines brighter at the thought of this enormous cornucopia. TSR is a great innovator of games. They don't let the games become stagnant and mundane. They revise what doesn't work and constantly strive to make the gamers perfect dream. It's enjoyable to see their gaming worlds come to life in accessories such as novels and comic books. To be able to plug in the SEGA Genesis and play Dungeons and Dragons! Things I never dreamed of when I was a wee lad! The mighty and imperial emperors of TSR bring the gaming and fantasy lovers visions to new heights.

Wizards of The Coast. "WHO?!" Aye, a new gaming force to be reckoned with. The great accomplishment this company should be known for is the emendation of the game *Talislanta.* A wise move indeed, WotC has brought back from the dead a new and revised edition of one of my top choice games ever. A game that can propel you out of the norm and into an entirely different view of fantasy worlds. Alas, I shall not want to discuss this in much bulk as of yet for *Talislanta* shall soon materialize in one of my invigorating reviews. But suffice it to say that if you want a varied taste to your fantasy buds, *Talislanta* which is out at this very moment, is a sagacious maneuver indeed. A new world, new and exciting races, a new system, new choices! Take my word that Wizards of the Coast shall soon blow the doors off the great gaming wall.

White Wolf. The Ivory Lupine Lord of Games brings us, in my opinion, the greatest of gothic and horror...*Vampire*, and it's recently debuted brother-game, *Werewolf.* These games add spice to the role-playing stew. If playing the steadfast warrior who daily combats the beast and rescues the girl is getting timeworn, then slide into the role of a dark and cunning bloodsucker or a raging and ferocious garou. Try to survive against the human race who will constantly seek to destroy you and your kin or vice versa. You can play in modern day (where most of the supplements are set) or in any other time era for vampires and werewolves date back beyond the annals of history. Be on guard! Just because you're a vampire or werewolf doesn't mean all the other tribes of your kin are allies. Quite the opposite, the tribes have a hard time getting along it seems. Life, or *Unlife*, is an endless endeavor for these denizens of the dark. Also, if you decide to merge these two games, be aware that vampires and werewolves seldom (but of course they can) get along. Bloody feuds can result from too much interaction. Do not worry, gentle gamers, a full review is forthcoming.

In addition, White Wolf produces *Ars Magica*, a fantasy role-playing game that centers around, you guessed it, magic. Gamers play not just a character but a Covenant, a gathering of wizardly companions who struggle to maintain their stronghold and all of its inhabitants, which the characters also play. Remember! White Wolf, much like the once young comic company, Dark Horse, is gaining full force.

FASA. The FASA corporation brings this Fool meager gaming enjoyment. Yes, I don't absolutely love everybody. BUT, I don't hate FASA, however I would like to give my honest and open thoughts. My enjoyment stems mostly in the form of the most excellent *Star Trek Combat Simulator*. The ultimate science fiction epic comes to life in a stategy wargame. Assume the role of a starship captain and guide your ship through battles in deep space. On the other hand, (here I go) the game

Battletech leaves me in a bitter mood. A great idea wasted with uninventive designs. Honestly, the designs of some of the Mecha is taken exactly from Palladium's *Robotech* series and games. Not even a change in colors or in symbols! What the hell? I lower my head at this for this is not what creative design is about! FASA would have been better off to keep with the idea of their other "tech-war" games like *Renegade Legion* and *Centurion*. One good point, their packages look nice. Nice art. Cool paintings. FASA also produces *Shadowrun*, elves, dwarves and trolls in a cyberpunk future. I haven't looked at this game in depth as of yet.

PALLADIUM BOOKS

Palladium Books. Palladium delivers a most enjoyable game in the form of the great animated series, *Robotech*. Yes, finally I was able to fly with Rick Hunter and Roy Folker, something I've always wanted to do for some weird reason. I battled the Zentraedi and Invid for protection of the earth, which is something I wanted to do even before Robotech came out (those bastiches!). My Veritech fighter screamed though the sky as lasers and missiles exploded about my hull and I laughed with great mirth. Truthfully, this is the only game I've played from Palladium. More to come in the future. I promise.

I.C.E.®

Iron Crown Enterprises. ICE has brought J.R.R. Tolkien's *Middle Earth* to the gaming world, and that, in itself, is an incredibly commendable feat because they have done it so well. The greatest fantasy epic is brought from the novels into a masterful system. Characters range from stalwart hobbits or Immortal Elf-kind to a valorous Rider of Rohan or an enduring dwarf from the Lonely Mountain. Travel with the companions of the ring and fight in the War of The Rings or make your very own classic campaign. This Gaming Fool dearly treasures ICE's Middle Earth Role Playing (MERP) game as much as the Great Tolkien's novels. Verily! I bid you to peruse this one for it is a well-thought and superior system for new and old gamers alike. Tolkien fanatics will be hard-pressed to find a single loophole in ICE's research.

In addition, ICE offers other games which I have honestly not looked at in depth (Hey, I've looked at every game! Some more than others, that's all.) but they are based on the very same system and are actually an advanced expansion of the Middle Earth system. I suggest starting with MERP.

Well, my companions, my first article now comes to a sad but enlightening conclusion. Worry Not! I shall return upon the very next issue of our illustrious magazine with a review of TSR's *Tales of The Lance*. It shall be a grand time for all!

I've given my opinion on some of the companies that create games and I hope that you shall heed my words. Give all role-playing games a chance! Remember this...if one night you encounter Mogglob, a fiesty and mumbling Goblin of ill repute (you'll know him by the squishy squishing of his oversized and saturated boots), avoid angering him and pay him proper homage (hide, if you get the chance) for he is perhaps the mightiest warrior in this reality. No joke. Until next time I bid you good journey, and may your treasure chest never run empty!

THE GAMING FOOL!

TRADING CARD NEWS

Fangoria On A Card

An invitation you can't resist from Comic Images is the new Fangoria *Collector Horror Cards*. America's foremost horror publication shows its true guts and gore in an all-new gruesome trading card series. 90 full color horror cards include special effects cards from the new eerie vampire movie "Children of the Night" and introduce the world premiere of the Comic Images Chromium Cards. You got to see 'em to believe 'em! Coming this Halloween!

Time Is Not Absolute

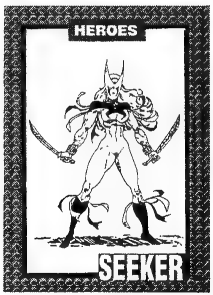
Comic Images and Valiant present *Unity* trading cards. *Unity*, the hot new collectible superhero epic brings together all the stars of the Valiant Universe. Retold in a stunning series of 90 electrifying cards! As a bonus, six dazzling Comic Images *Chromium Cards* featuring Valiant Universe rookies will be inserted in this incredible new format. You got to see 'em to believe 'em!

Cards of the King

Elvis Presley cards are currently being marketed by the River Group, Inc.. The set will eventually include 660 pictures of the king of rock 'n 'roll from his earliest days as a teen idol to his final days as a Las Vegas showman.

Sky Comics' New Concept

Sky Comics is currently marketing a new kind of card that they have aptly named *Gatefold Trading Cards*. When folded it is the normal dimensions of your average everyday trading cards and will fit in any slipcase but this card also comes with "wings" which fold out, automatically doubling the width of the card. That's twice as much card for your money! *Gatefold Trading Cards* hold more artwork than any card has a right to hold! The first of these specially released cards (look for the listing in your distributor's catalogues) features their resident vengeance-dealing heroine known as *The Seeker* and the second release of this cards will feature their newest hot hero, *Tempered Steele*. Beautiful art and an innovative concept make this item a "must" for card and comic enthusiasts alike! Look for your specially inserted Sky Comics' "Blood Pack" *Gatefold Trading Card* in *Arena Magazine #6*.



TRADING CARD NEWS

Prism Cards From Comic Images

Three hot cards series are forthcoming from Comic Images. *Shadow Hawk*, the dark and mysterious realistic despised by the good guy and the bad guys! Jim Valentino's new nocturnal avenger makes his debut in the graphic 90 card series. As a bonus, six Comic Images Prism Cards will be randomly packed within the series. Also, Comic Images releases *The Silver Surfer All-Prism Series*! Marvel's sleek alien superhero and defender of Earth makes his debut in this spectacular 72 card All-Prism series. That's right! Every card's a prism. This unforgettable series promises to become a collector's classic! And last is the *Globetrotters Trading Cards*. The best known, best traveled basketball team in the world becomes an all-new 90 card trading series. Look for six special Comic Images Prism Cards randomly packed within the series.

UPPER DECK SUES NFLPA

The following item comes from a press release issued by the Upper Deck Company: "The Upper Deck Company filed a complaint today [9/1/92] in United States District Court for the Southern District of California against both National Football League Properties and the National Football League Players Association. In the complaint The Upper Deck Company contends that they are required to pay a duplicate royalty to NFL Properties for players whose rights have been granted to them by the NFLPA. From the determination by the courts, The Upper Deck Company will clearly know who represents which players.

"In making the announcement, Richard McWilliam, President and CEO of The Upper Deck Company said, 'We agonized over the decision and held off taking this action for as long as possible before going to the courts for help. We have been in serious discussions with both parties for over a year but could not come to a resolution that was beneficial to all parties.'

"We have always placed the desires of collectors first and foremost while being in compliance with our licensors for each product we offer. The current situation between the football licensors has allowed us no alternative for meeting the needs of the collectors,' McWilliam added.

"Football fans want to watch all the players play in games seen on television and at the stadiums. Card collectors who show their involvement in sports by collecting and trading want all the players in their foil packs too,' McWilliam said. Under the current agreements and legal climate we find it difficult to offer the fans what they want to collect. This is harmful to the industry, collectors and hobby shop owners."

"The 1992 Upper Deck Low Series Football includes two sets of cards of players whose rights have been secured; one set through the National Football League Players Association and one set through National Football League Properties.

"Both sets will utilize an advanced technology waterless ink printing process that will give these and all 1992 Upper Deck sports cards the sharpest, crystal-clear images and most vibrant, high-contrast colors ever."

TRADING CARD NEWS

Topps Trading Cards Are Hot

The premiere series of trading cards featuring Jim Lee's powerful new team of mutant superheroes, *WILDC.A.T.S, Covert Action Teams*, is pulling out all stops. It's a 100 card series of full color fronts and backs. The contents include enhanced art from *WILDC.A.T.S #1 & #2* plus original Jim Lee art created exclusively for this series. You'll also get other fan favorites' renditions of WILDC.A.T.S characters, random prism cards and Jim Lee autographed cards.

Along those same lines, Topps is releasing *Image Comics Cards*. The most exciting new comics universe - the Image Universe - is the subject of an exclusive 200 card series. The Image creators are rendering all new, original artwork for this series and Topps promises to make this one of its most lavishly produced sets ever! Fans can look forward to unique, animated creator cards, 3-D holograms, spectacular new artwork and a whole lot more.

Shipping in November from Topps is the exclusive *Bram Stoker's Dracula Movie Trading Cards*. These cards capture the complete movie story - the action, drama, and romance - in breathtaking full color. The special subset includes comic book art by *Dracula* artist Mike Mignola. This 100 card series fetures completely different images than the cards bagged with *Dracula* comics.

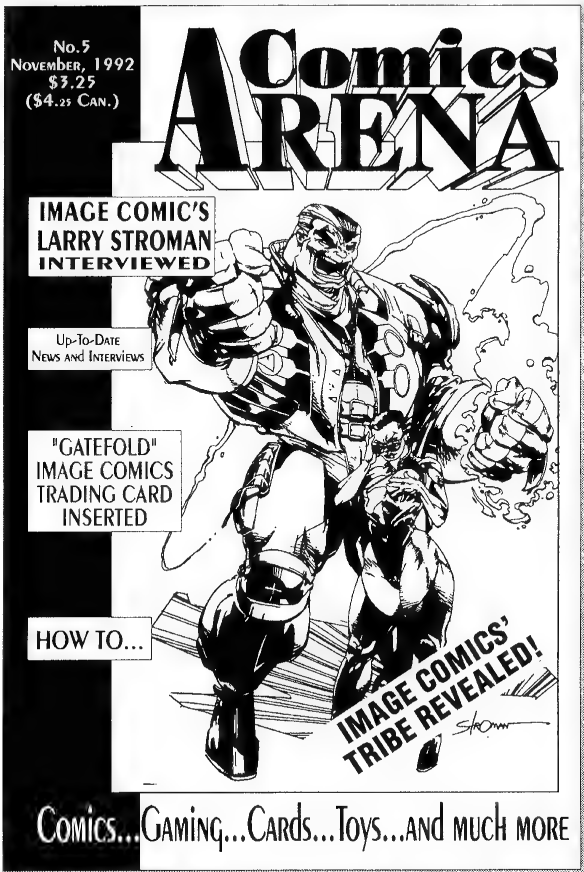
In early '93, Topps gives you the *Star Wars Commemorative Trading Cards* set. This is the definitive collection of cards based on the *Star Wars* saga. While Topps produced movie cards for each of the three *Star Wars* films, the *Commemmorative Series* features all new never seen before on Topps cards. In fact, much of of the material in this set has not been previously published anywhere. Exciting subsets feature fan favorite comic artists' renditions of *Star Wars* scenes and concepts, special painted character cards by Joe Jusko, sketches, poster and production art from the Lucasfilm archives, rare collectibles and an extensive array of comics-related art.

Ultimate Trading Cards

Two new sets are going to be released fron Ultimate. The first is *Northern Exposure*, the #1 rated TV drama. These cards will be in 6,000 numbered cases and will be a 100 card series featuring high gloss coating, randomly inserted autographs of actors, randomly inserted instant win prizes and five lucky winners will instantly win a trip to Cicely to watch Northern Exposure being filmed and possibly appear in an episode of the show.

The second set will be, yes, *Popeye And Friends*! It features guest appearances such as Babe Ruth and Don Mattingly and as a bonus you may find the *1933 Original Babe Ruth Trading Card*! These top quality cards are full color with original art, new unpublished strips, randomly inserted specialty and autograph cards signed by superstars and strip artists and 1,000 gold Popeye cards. A 100 card series from Ultimate Trading Card Company.

MORE FUN THAN A BARREL OF WIZARDS!



ON SALE IN OCTOBER

ALL THE ACTION YOU CAN HANDLE...AND NEWS. TOO.

EDITORIAL CONTINUED...

comics, but I find myself having less and less patience for stupid or repetitive stories. As a result, I find that I'm getting spanked by editors in letter columns a lot more than I used to. These people don't like criticism very much. I read a lot of DC books, so I fire off a lot of letters to DC, both positive and negative. So far this year I've been spanked in the pages of *The Shadow* and *Star Trek* (and I'm sure I would have been rebuked in all the *Batman* books if they bothered to print my letters).

Anyway, I'd like to share a recent spanking, what happened, and how it was handled by DC. You can see if you agree, disagree, or have no opinion. But I don't think I've ever not had an opinion. That's what got me into this mess.

I hate *Star Trek: The Next Generation*. A few of the reasons why will be explained in the forthcoming letter, but basically it's because I don't think the producers have taken advantage of all the advances made in television in the last twenty-five years. The shows are all ripped-off from the original, much better Trek. The crew are a bunch of politically correct, blank-stared morons, who are so unexciting it boggles the mind. There is no depth or sophistication to any of the scripts, and no ensemble approach to the show, which contributed to the success of such shows as Hill St. Blues and L.A. Law. The show commits the worst sin of all by just being boring.

Okay, so I don't like *ST:TNG*. I don't watch the show, I don't read the DC comic. But I do read DC's Star Trek comic, and I was less than thrilled to read that there would be a crossover between the two. Titled "The Modala Imperative", the story dealt with the planet Modala, and in the first four issue miniseries the original crew handled a problem there, and in the second miniseries, seventy years later, the Next Generation crew handled a problem there. Neither miniseries was very good, and I wrote DC a letter to tell them so. I've been printed in Star Trek pretty much every time I had written, so it wasn't like I was just writing to whine about the miniseries. I thought the editor at the time, Bob Greenberger, wouldn't get angry with someone who was just sharing an honest opinion. I was wrong.

The letter they printed was rather HACKED TO DEATH. Here is the letter as printed in *Star Trek #36*, and Bob Greenberger's comments. Following that will be the actual letter in full.

Jerry's edited letter:

Dear Bob,

I hope you welcome honest feedback, 'cause here goes:

I'm following *ST:TNG-TMI* with interest, much as I follow most of DC's ST output. As a self-avowed *ST: TNG* hater, I am very much opposed to any crossover of the two series. Turns out my hope of these characters having any personality at all was dashed against the rocks again. Not even a fountain of creativity like Peter David could breathe life into these stiffs.

The first miniseries was bland and uninteresting, from the artwork to the too long, oversimplistic story. Even the colors were bland and dull; however, I'd prefer 1000 MODALA IMPERATIVEs of that caliber to one with the TNG cast.

Peter does what he can, but his pseudo-Enterprise crew still come off as whiny, insincere, ignorant yuppies. Their only saving grace is how they treat Spock and McCoy. Peter's writing strength has always been his characterization, and his talents shine with these characters. Spock has mellowed a bit and McCoy is the crusty curmudgeon we always knew he'd turn out to be.

I'm not sure if I'll be buying the rest of *ST: TNG-TMI*. As nice as it is to see how well Spock and McCoy are handled in their advanced years, the presence of those annoying *ST:TNG* people sticks in my craw like a cockroach. It took everything I had to even buy a book with these guys on the cover. Good thing Spock and McCoy were there, too.

Jerry Smith

Now, editor

Bob Greenberger's reply:

I had to edit much of your letter, Jerry, because it was close-minded and arrogant. What I did choose to run was so we could have dissenting opinion on a generally well-received miniseries. While many of us took time to warm up to the 24th century and it's Enterprise crew, they have shown amazing glimpses of what humankind could become. I do agree that a certain sense of dynamism, peculiar to shows of the 1960's, is lacking here, but Picard and company have grown into interesting, multifaceted characters. With five seasons behind us, we certainly know more about what makes these characters tick than the entire second banana bunch from the original series. It's unlikely you will give the series a chance, which is a shame. You're missing a well produced TV series with some thoughtful stories, entertaining characters, and an optimistic view of our destiny.

The original letter, unedited:

Dear Bob,

I hope you welcome honest feedback, 'cause here goes.

I'm following *Star Trek: The Modala Imperative* with interest, much as I follow most of DC's ST output. As a self-avowed *ST: The Next Generation* hater (ugh! I hate even writing those words), I am very much opposed to any crossover of the two series. Turns out my hope of these characters having any personality at all was dashed against the rocks again. Not even a fountain of creativity like Peter David could breathe life into these stiffs.

The first Modala Imperative

was bland and uninteresting, from the artwork to the too long, oversimplistic story. Even the colors were bland and dull. However, I'd prefer 1000 Modala Imperatives of that caliber to one with the Next Generation losers.

Peter David does what he can, but his pseudo-Enterprise crew still come off as whiny, insincere, ignorant yuppies. Their only saving grace is how they treat Spock and McCoy. Peter's writing strength has always been his characterization, and his talents shine with these characters. Spock has mellowed a bit and McCoy is the crusty curmudgeon we always knew he'd turn out to be. Picard almost comes off as likable as he sucks up to the characters that allowed his miserable existence.

I'm not sure if I'll be buying the rest of The Modala Imperative. As nice as it is to see how well Spock and McCoy are handled in their advanced years, the presence of those annoying Next Generation people sticks in my crawl like a cockroach. It took everything I had to even buy a book with Captain Weenie on the cover. Good thing Spock and McCoy were there too.

One saving grace for this book was the absence of James T. Kirk. I'm sure he's still alive and kicking somewhere in the universe--mabye he can't stand the new Enterprise crew either. I'm sure he just doesn't want to have to beat the crap out of Picard the first time he surrenders the Enterprise to the ememy. No, I don't think Kirk would like that at all.

As a final thought, please don't have any other crossovers between the real *Star Trek* and *Star Trek: The Next Generation*. Such crossovers give *ST:TNG* a sick sort of legitimacy it surely doesn't deserve. No one is forcing me to buy (or, heaven forbid, watch) such things, and I probably won't do so again. But that is still my opinion. A final question: Do you really think that in another twenty-five years anyone will remember *Star Trek: The Next Generation*? No. So why should I pay attention to them now?

Respectfully Submitted,
Jerry Smith

See? Wasn't I really nice about hating those Next Generation losers? Whoops, I'm not allowed by DC to call the NG people "losers" (it was edited out of the third paragraph and replaced with "crew"). Yes, that sums up my feelings...."crew". Good call, Bob. Also, any negative mention of Captain Picard was edited. Okay, I was a little snide when mentioning him, but he is the worst part of the show.

As for "arrogant" and "close-minded", let's see what the dictionary has to say. Webster defines arrogant as: "offensively exaggerating one's own importance". Well...not guilty. I did say that these were my own honest opinions, and as such inferred that they were no better or worse than anyone elses. I think I'm right, but I don't think you're an idiot if you don't agree with me. Although I will admit I am at a loss to see why people like *ST:TNG*. For "close-minded", Webster says nothing, but I will say this: I've seen enough episodes of *Who's the Boss* to know it sucks. It's awful, and I would never watch it of my own violition. I know what the writers are trying to achieve, I know the production values, and I know how talented (or not) the actors are. I'm familiar enough with *Who's the Boss* to know I don't like it and I never will. Same goes for shows like *Full House, Jake and the Fat Man, Super Force, Perfect Strangers,* the list goes on and on. The same goes for *ST:TNG*. I hated the first year. I detested the fifth year. I'll hate next year, I'll hate the reruns, and--god forbid--if it ever makes it to the big screen, I'll despise that too. It's the nature of the beast. I know what the show is trying to do enough to know I'll despise Captain Picard now and forever because he is a weak, ineffectual character who has no business commanding a Starship. The crew are equally as uninteresting. So we know more about them than we knew about Scotty, Sulu, Uhura, et. al. during the original five-year mission? We still care more about the original crew.

So that's what happened. I'm probably crazy to think for a minute that DC would print that letter in full, but if they were going to cut out all the good parts, they shouldn't have bothered.

I'll still be writing letters of comment, and the positive always outnumber the negative. I get much more personal pleasure writing to tell someone they've done a great job than to point out mistakes in storytelling. But, the negative letters, as always, will be brutally honest.

As always, Jerry Smith welcomes positive or negative comments about his work on this issue. Feel free to write with either at *5487 Carry Back Dr., Burlington, KY 41005*

NEXT ISSUE:
IMAGE!
STROMAN
JOHNSON
TRIBE
POLYBAGGED WITH A TRADING CARD!

We need more letters . . .

and a name for this page!

Dear Bob and Mike,

First off, I'd like to thank you for the unexpected exposure in your issue's "Preview". It was quite a treat to see that the *Pandora Pill* caught your attention and, that out of all the great books coming out in August that you could have chosen, *Pandora Pill* got the gig! For a small publisher, every bit counts. *Pandora Pill* will be going to the printer soon and you're on the list for a couple copies hot off the press.

Secondly, I'd like to pass along a xerox of my best seller yet, *Sex & Death*. I'm out of extras. However, I've decided to go with a second printing for a November release. Originally, I solicited the second printing for May but my orders were destroyed by DC's *Batman* blitz and *Spawn's* megashare of the comic shop owner's dollar. But the fact that I've gotten letters from people thanking me for *Sex & Death* has encouraged me to try again.

In closing, I again would like to thank you for the exposure and would also like to wish you the best of luck on your publishing venture. It's a great looking book and now more than ever (especially since *Amazing Heroes* has disappeared) the fan needs a publication where he can find a variety of comics information. Not just Marvel, DC and Image, but some of the harder to find alternatives that showcase up and coming talent and offer something altogether different from what any of the large companies can give. Take care.

Mark Paniccia
c/o Acid Rain Studios

Guys,

So, you want to know what I think of Arena? THANK YOU!!!! For what, you ask? For being a true comics/gaming magazine. "OK. Thanks," you say. "But can you be more specific? And anything you don't like?" OK. Let me give it to you.

1) I love your covers. So what if "Warlock" magazine's got McFarlane doing covers? All he does are Image or Marvel stuff. But you've got me hooked! Black Hood! Guy Gardner! Superman! Eclipso! Darkstars! LOBO! Demon! WOW!!!!

2) News - Well, I can get most of it through *Comics Buyers Guide*, but many fans don't get that so, it's a good thing you print it.

3) Dave Sim: Live and Uncensored! Who's next?

4) Superman or Hulk? Well, someone on the computer network once said, "The Hulk can lift 100 tons. Now, his max, which is yet undetermined, would be close to 500 tons. Now, a wimpy character like Geo-Force can lift 1,500 tons or something. Superman, Shazam, Martian Manhunter, Lobo, Lar Gand, Captain Atom and many other DC hard hitters would simply crush the Hulk. The Hulk is indeed a powerful Marvel character, but DC operates on different power levels than Marvel does and so, there is no real comparison." (Thanks, Enigma).

5) Humphrey Duck - HAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA HAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA!

6) How To...How about pictures of people in action?

7) Gaming News - is this all?

8) The Gaming Fool's Review - I like axes, too.

a) "C'mon Play Serious..." see #5.

9) Trading Card News - Why?

10) Are you happy now?

P.S. - How about an interview with Kieth Giffen (who is the coolest artist on the planet!)?

Doug Turner
A.K.A. The Green Question

1) Thanks (blush)!

2) I ask you, Doug, to compare CBG news to AM news for depth and quantity.

3) Next celebrity columnist: Lurene Haines.

4) I don't think we're trying to determine, in the long run, who could punch the other's lights out. Superman or Hulk, the big companies' heavy hitters...who gives you more enjoyment?

5) Asher thanks you.

6) Sorry, it's over, already. Good idea, though.

7) You wouldn't believe how much you have to scrape for good gaming news. We're doing our best. Keep your eyes open because this section keeps getting bigger.

8) Axes are cool, ain't they?

a) John thanks you.

9) Why not?

10) Yes.

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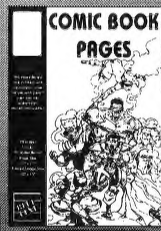

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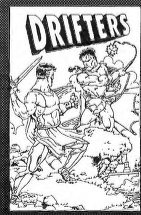

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